

NAVY NEWS

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A COMMANDO of the Royal Marines Armoured Support Group mans the General Purpose Machine Gun of his Viking as the Cougar 11 deployment reaches its climax. The Vikings were at the heart of Sea Khanjar, the final exercise for the UK's amphibious task group, led by Britain's flagship HMS Albion. See pages 2-3 for details.

Picture: LA(Phot) Si Ethell, 40 Commando



ROLLING THUNDER



● HMS Sutherland follows HMS Middleton with flagship HMS Albion (centre) and HMS Echo (right) during Sea Khanjar



● Sutherland's Lynx, callsign Sabre, approaches Middleton to deliver the ship's Royal Marines boarding team by rope



● Proof that WAFUs can walk on water... LAET Greg Coulter 'dances' on the surface of the Indian Ocean as Sutherland practises winching drills



Sabres, daggers

NOT so much Band of Brothers as sand of brothers...

Silhouetted against the rising sun, the men of Charlie Company, 40 Commando, lead marines from the United Arab Emirates' Presidential Guard on a dawn raid.

Before first light two landing craft from HMS Albion put the sea soldiers ashore on the island of Umm Al Hatab – and Sea Khanjar was under way in earnest.

The exercise was one of two major work-outs for the Cougar 11 deployment this past month, one with the Saudis (Red Alligator), one in the UAE (Sea Khanjar – Sea Dagger) designed to test the ability of an amphibious task group to operate in extreme temperatures (in excess of 37°C) thousands of miles from home with the forces of friendly nations.

Fresh from passage through the Suez Canal, the task group – the Navy's flagship HMS Albion, her escorting frigate Sutherland, amphibious support ship RFA Cardigan Bay and tanker RFA Wave Knight – was thrust into the eight days of Red Alligator (red for the sea, alligator for things with bite which move out of the water...).

It featured everything which a task group is expected to deal with – from maritime security/counter-piracy operations, to a full-scale amphibious assault – working hand-in-hand with Saudis.

The amphibious assault element of the exercise came courtesy of the green berets of 40 Commando, embarked in Albion and Cardigan Bay, plus Albion's inherent Royal Marines landing craft of 6 Assault Squadron, and the specialists of 539 Assault Squadron RM with their assortment of landing craft and hovercraft, and the Viking

vehicles of the commandos' Armoured Support Group.

The eight days of Red Alligator reached their pinnacle with a simulated joint assault against an objective on land.

"Exercises such as this ensure that both countries are able to make an important contribution to regional stability and counter-terrorism," explained Capt James Morley, Commanding Officer of HMS Albion, and Commander of the Amphibious Task Force.

All the choreography of the assets under his command counts for nought without one key factor: the weather.

Forecasting in the Red Sea might seem a piece of cake. Today. *Scorchio*. Tomorrow. *Scorchio*. The day after tomorrow. Well, you get the picture...

But operating in such temperatures puts severe strain on the ship's companies and machinery of the Cougar task group – which also includes an assortment of helicopters (Lynx and Sea Kings) and landing/assault craft.

Heat and humidity can sap the energy of personnel – and play havoc with kit as it overheats. Swell, surf, sea temperature all play a part in dictating amphibious operations.

Each day a weather balloon is sent aloft from Albion's flight deck, reaching up to 15 miles high, recording wind, air temperature, pressure and humidity as it goes.

Those recordings are fed into the twice-daily forecasts produced by the three-strong met team both for the ships and the task group ship staff, and are sent back to the Met Office headquarters in Exeter.

In addition, the meteorologists also record sightings of whales, dolphins and other marine life, even the bioluminescence in the ship's wake – the ethereal green

hue given off by algae at night – and send their reports back to nature and conservation groups.

If it sounds pink and fluffy, well, there's a hard edge to the weather forecasts as well.

"As well as contributing to the planning process, our data directly benefits the fighting capability of the task force," explains LS Chris Edmonds.

"Take ballistic meteorology. HMS Sutherland is able to use meteorological data to adjust her 4.5in gun to take account of wind speed and other factors to ensure it hits the target."

Lt Lee Newman, the task force's senior meteorologist, adds: "There's a genuine feeling of achievement when our predicted weather materialises. As we know from TV weather reports, that can be a difficult task."

"Weather affects all aspects of the ship – personnel, aircraft, sensors, weapons systems. But it's not just about the impact weather has on our equipment. It also shapes the challenges and missions we face."

"Perhaps the most obvious current example is the connection between the monsoon weather patterns and instances of piracy in the Somali Basin and Horn of Africa."

BARELY had Red Alligator slithered back into the Red Sea than the Cougar ships were off the ranges of Al Hamra, 120 miles west of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

The 'ingredients' for the Sea Khanjar were 1 x amphibious assault ship (HMS Albion), 2 x minehunters (HM Ships Middleton and Pembroke), 1 x flagship escort and multi-role frigate (HMS Sutherland), 1 x survey ship (HMS Echo) and 1 x UAE amphibious ship,



● Vikings of the Royal Marines' Armoured Support Group roll on to the beach after being delivered from ship (HMS Albion) to shore (United Arab Emirates) during Exercise Sea Khanjar



s and alligators

Landing Craft Tank L66. Add a few hundred Royal Marines of 40 Commando, plus their UAE counterparts, and you have the perfect recipe for a week or so of top maritime/amphibious action.

Like Red Alligator before it, a sizeable chunk of Sea Khanjar was dedicated to maritime security, with Middleton playing the 'bad guys' for once.

It fell to the boarding team from HMS Sutherland to put the ne'er-do-wells back in their place, taking over the Hunt-class ship from the air and the sea.

Sabre – Sutherland's 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx – delivered Royal Marines by rapid rope, a far-from-easy task given the very limited uncluttered deck space on the small minehunter.

It wasn't much easier for the Fighting Clan's two sea boats to offload their passengers – armed naval boarding parties – in a worsening sea state.

All of which was observed by eight members of the UAE's Presidential Guard, who joined Sutherland for a day to witness the Devonport-based frigate's boarding teams conduct drills.

"They were especially interested in both tactics and equipment used during boarding operations and seemed to be particularly impressed by the Royal Marines' securing techniques," said Lt Adam Newns, Sutherland's deputy weapon engineer officer – and also the Fighting Clan's boarding officer.

"The UAE Presidential Guard are only in their infancy yet those sent to visit Sutherland seemed keen and excited to learn about boarding operations and the Royal Navy's role in the Middle East."

The boarding ops were just a small slice of the Sea Khanjar 'cake'.

Things became tastier when the task group came under sustained (and simulated) attacks from aircraft and fast attack craft.

From the sea proceedings moved ashore to the excellent Al Hamra ranges which offer the chance for live firings, a mock town for the men of 40 Commando to practise urban combat and a military airfield.

"Working and training with our Emirati counterparts has been great," enthused Lt Matt Webber RM, of Fire Support Group Charlie Company, 40 Commando.

"They are keen, enthusiastic and, despite the language barrier, easy to work with. The training facilities have been first class – everyone has learned something and improved their skills."

His colleague, 40 Cdo's operations officer Maj Rich Morris, said the ability to work hand-in-hand with the UAE Armed Forces had been "invaluable".

"We've been able to make full use of the excellent facilities ashore at Al Hamra which include a variety of firing ranges and a modern urban war-fighting complex."

Mne Liam Rees of 7 Troop, Charlie Company found working with the UAE troops "a great experience".

He continued: "We've trained together using each others equipment to achieve a common goal. They showed us how they use their Off Shore Raiding Craft to covertly get troops ashore."

"We showed them how to use our Vikings to dismount from our landing craft and wade ashore before attacking an

exercise target."

Fellow commando Mne Lewis Jones added: "During the exercises we were on live firing ranges and had the opportunity to test out each other's weapon systems, which gave us a better understanding of how each other operates and why."

Aside from the obvious language difficulties between Brits and Emirati troops, there are also substantial cultural differences between the military of the two nations.

Aboard Albion throughout the exercise was Royal Navy Reservist Lt Cdr Shah – his full name is withheld for security reasons – who served as the RN task group's cultural advisor.

Fluent in Arabic and Farsi as well as English, the officer advised his colleagues on a myriad of customs and facets of daily life – religion, eating habits, how to behave in public places, 'dos and don'ts'.

The key message he imparted to the Cougar personnel was respect for local customs. "By learning about their culture and putting this into practice, we've engaged more closely with our UAE partners in Sea Khanjar," said Lt Cdr Shah.

"That increases co-operation and improves the value of our training."

Albion's Commanding Officer Capt James Morley concurs.

"Sea Khanjar has allowed both nations to share experience, skills and equipment. More importantly, it's strengthened friendships between our two countries at every level from senior officers to junior marines," he said.

"The UK prizes its close and enduring relationship with the United Arab Emirates."

More from Cougar on pages 8-9



● Commandos from Charlie Company lead UAE Presidential Guards on a patrol of Umm Al Hatab island and (above) Royal Marines and their Saudi counterparts take part in a live fire demonstration



● The Vikings lay on a show amid the Saudi Arabian dunes during Red Alligator





GLOBAL REACH



Fleet Focus

LARGE ships, small ships, old ships, new ships, real ships, toy ships – we might be heading for those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer but the Royal Navy is still working hard across the board.

One of the large ships, Cougar deployment flagship **HMS Albion**, has been involved in amphibious exercises in the Gulf, along with **HMS Sutherland** and **40 Commando Royal Marines** (see pages 2-3), while the assault ship also proved her versatility by topping up her little sister **HMS Middleton** (see page 9).

Talking of little ships, Hunt-class minehunter **HMS Brocklesby** has returned to the UK after her participation in Operation Unified Protector off Libya (see right).

Back with the big ships, and **HMS Illustrous** is back at sea, working up with Lynx and Apache helicopters after a £40 million refit in Scotland (see opposite).

And the biggest ship of all this month is the **USS George HW Bush**, which hosted a party of Royal Navy personnel who are taking a look at how the Americans operate big 'cat and trap' carriers in anticipation of the arrival of the RN's Queen Elizabeth class (see pages 22-23).

Ships don't come much older than **HMS Victory**, which has had her masts removed as part of her conservation programme (see page 31).

Of more recent vintage are the Type 22 frigates, the final pair of which – **HMS Cornwall** and **HMS Cumberland** – have both been taken out of commission (see pages 16-17).

One of the newest ships in the RN, **HMS Dauntless**, has been on hot weather trials off the American East Coast (see page 18), while hundreds more Type 45s are now on order, sadly they are rather smaller than the real thing – the latest in a series of military toys (see page 20).

New (interim) ice patrol ship **HMS Protector** is working towards her first deployment later this year, and we take a glimpse at her as she continues the transformation from commercial vessel to warship (see pages 10-11).

Also new is a **Forward Operating Base** as seen in Afghanistan, only this one is for sailors and Marines to practise on in deepest Hampshire (see page 19).

More enduring Navy tasks are continuing unabated.

The Bagger Sea Kings of the Fleet Air Arm are proving their value as eyes in the sky – aircraft from **854 Naval Air Squadron** clocked up the Navy's 1,000th mission in Afghanistan, and were instrumental in a major drugs bust (see page 7).

The Navy's contribution to operations against Gaddafi's regime in Libya included veteran **HMS Liverpool**, a brief but busy cameo from **HMS Iron Duke** and **HMS Ocean** with her complement of Army Apache gunships (see page 12).

Type 42 destroyer **HMS Edinburgh** is heading to the South Atlantic to take up her duties around the Falklands, and was greeted by mountainous seas as she sailed from South Africa (see page 8).

Frigate **HMS Monmouth** was met by more benign seas as she headed for a break in the Seychelles (see page 18).

The Royal Marines of **3 Commando Brigade** are continuing to build bridges in Afghanistan, driving off insurgents and allowing normal life to take root once more (see pages 14-15).

And more mariners owe their lives to Navy aviators; **771 NAS** plucked two yachtsmen to safety 75 miles off the Isles of Scilly while the Merlin of **HMS St Albans** helped as a tanker struggled in monsoon conditions in the Indian Ocean (see page 6).

Finally, two frigates played their part in Armed Forces Day 2011 – **HMS Portland** was at Leith for the main event in Edinburgh while **HMS Montrose** fired the salute in Plymouth (see page 33).

● Brocklesby's crew acknowledge the cheers from her sister ship **HMS Cattistock**

Picture: LA(Phot) Jenny Lodge, FRPU East



Praise for 'jewel in the crown'

THREE cheers for **HMS Brocklesby** resounded across Portsmouth's No.2 Basin as the minehunter returned safely from harm's way off Libya.

She did so with an *Ersatz* Jolly Roger hanging limply from her mainmast – a 'mine and cross bones', crafted by her crew to commemorate the underwater explosive the ship's company found and sent to kingdom come.

Tugs provided a jet of water blast in appreciation of Brocklesby's deeds – while the ship's company of her sister **HMS Cattistock** lined the upper deck and gave three hearty cheers as the minehunter returned to her home basin.

Brocklesby's mine destruction was the high point of a six-month tour of duty for the Hunt-class ship, which spent half her deployment keeping the shipping lanes to the under-siege city of Misrata open.

Her actions off Misrata ensured that aid did indeed continue to arrive in the port and earned praise from Britain's second most

senior admiral.

Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar joined Brocklesby for her entry into Portsmouth and thanked her crew for their unstinting efforts. The ship had been, he said, "the jewel in the crown of operations in Libya".

He added: "I wanted to pay tribute and say how proud I am of the effort and professionalism the ship's company has demonstrated over the past 155 days."

Brocklesby left the Solent at the beginning of the year, originally to serve with NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 – an international mine warfare force which patrols European waters on exercises.

Those exercises turned to war when Libya erupted in violence and the group was re-deployed to support the NATO mission enforcing UN sanctions and supporting the country's civilian population.

At the end of April Brocklesby began clearing the port of Misrata

of mines after NATO forces spotted pro-Gaddafi forces laying the explosive devices.

Despite the threat of attack from artillery fire, rockets and missiles, the minehunter used her sonar and underwater mine disposal system Seafox to locate one mine which had been placed just a mile away from the harbour entrance in Misrata.

The minehunter then stayed in the area for a further six days in range of hostile troops to continue the search for any further mines that would stop the vital aid from reaching Libyan citizens.

The MV Red Star was the first vessel to enter the port following the clearance operation, and despite the artillery rounds being fired in the port, she picked up more than 700 civilians injured during the conflict.

This was the first time that a Royal Navy minehunter has been involved in live mine clearance operations within range of enemy guns since 2003 in Iraq. It also

saw the new Seafox mine disposal system come through its baptism of fire, dealing with live ordnance for the first time.

"The Royal Navy has always had a great reputation for mine clearance and it is precisely this type of operation that shows the world just how good we are," said CO Lt Cdr Jim Byron.

"We are extremely proud that we could use our skills and knowledge to open that port and allow humanitarian aid back into Libya where it is so desperately needed. Without this capability there could have been hundreds of lives lost through the detonation of that mine. I am so proud of my team – they just got on and did their business and they did it really, really well."

His ship spent her last few weeks patrolling and minehunting in the waters off the Misrata coastline as the threat of mines and waterborne improvised explosive devices remained high – so much so that Brocklesby has been replaced by **HMS Bangor**, which is performing the same duties.



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Better late than never...

SUCH is the demand for Royal Navy divers on operations right now it took seven months to get them together on Horsea Island to receive a coveted award...

...which is exactly why they won it in the first place.

The Naval Capability Trophy is only in its second year, introduced to recognise the greatest contribution made by a unit – or individual – to the Senior Service's front-line operations.

The Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control community (aka the Baggers) took the inaugural title in 2009. In 2010, the award went to the Fleet Diving Squadron.

The divers were informed of this recognition back in December... but it was July before they could be mustered in sufficient numbers for Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar to present the trophy at their HQ.

The squadron comprises seven diving units, based in Portsmouth, Devonport and Faslane, and committed daily around the world.

Right now RN divers are on the ground in Afghanistan serving as bomb disposal experts – a duty they also perform around the shores of the UK, dealing with the detritus of two world wars.

The squadron also conducts very shallow water mine countermeasures work in support of amphibious operations and carries out underwater maintenance and repairs of RN ships and submarines... saving the taxpayer thousands of pounds in the process.

The squadron's citation reads: "Busy, highly-motivated, but rewarded with challenging work across the full spectrum of operational diving, underwater engineering and explosive ordnance disposal tasks, the Fleet Diving Squadron continues to go from strength to strength."

"Their positive approach to taskings and willingness to take on new and ever more diverse operations in support of both Naval and joint requirements both afloat and ashore, from the ice of Norway to the deserts of Afghanistan, while continuing to deliver against all their existing commitments, marks them out as worthy recipients of this year's Naval Capability Trophy."

Admiral Soar handed the trophy to the squadron's Commanding Officer, Cdr Mark Savage who told CinC Fleet that after an "outstanding" 2010, "2011 is continuing in the same vein."

He added: "The diving units are justifiably proud of their work and what they have achieved – I am immensely grateful for the hard work and commitment the team has displayed."

New King's rule begins

THE Fleet Air Arm's new training aircraft has made its debut at its home for the next quarter of a century.

The King Air 350 Avengers have arrived at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall, where from this autumn it will perform the crucial task of teaching helicopter Observers the fundamentals of their job.

Four of the blue and white-liveried twin props are serving with 750 Naval Air Squadron, taking the place of the veteran Jetstreams the unit used for 30 years until this spring.

The first student Observers to train on the Avengers arrive in Cornwall in a few weeks. They're currently undergoing initial flying training and learning basic navigational skills at Barkston Heath in Lincolnshire.

750 personnel are spending the summer getting to grips with the new aircraft and the impressive systems on board, but they took a break from that to show off the Avengers at Culdrose's annual Air Day.



Lusty's Indian summer

DO NOT be fooled by the dazzling colours and lights, for this is no thing of beauty.

This is the most potent helicopter in Britain's arsenal about to lift off from the deck of HMS Illustrious somewhere in the Channel at dusk one July night.

Just days after returning to Portsmouth following an 18-month 'exile' north of the border in Rosyth, where she enjoyed a £40m refit, the carrier returned to sea to begin the long road back to front-line duties.

First up, Apaches from 664 Squadron, 4 Regiment Army Air Corps, which took the chance to bump neatly into position on Lusty's flight deck during a week of exercises off the South Coast.

The Apaches are heavily in demand right now off Libya (see page 12), where they've been repeatedly called upon to strike at government targets ashore from HMS Ocean.

Illustrious will take over as the nation's helicopter assault carrier from Ocean when the Mighty O enters refit, so there's a demanding work-up ahead for Lusty.

"It's a fantastic training package for us to be operating Apaches in this way," said Capt Jerry Kyd, Illustrious' Commanding Officer.

"It's not the first time that Apaches have flown from a carrier – they've flown from Ark and obviously Ocean over the past five years."

"It's very important that we can show we can integrate and offer that power projection to the government if they need it."

"It's not our judgement that counts on the question of where we operate, but it is our job to be as ready as possible."

As well as seeing the thermostat plummet during a cool, wet British summer, Army fliers used to Afghan heat have had to cope with high winds.

One pilot from 664 Sqn, who did not want to be named for security reasons, said: "It's very different from the desert but it should still be within our range of skills to fly from HMS Illustrious."

"The landing space is obviously smaller and it's a moving target that we are returning to from our flights, but we are confident that we can manoeuvre in most weathers."

While Apaches were flying from

her decks, amphibious assault personnel were working below on another of Lusty's rarer roles.

As a newly-converted helicopter carrier, the ship must be able to embark an assault group and deliver them complete with heavy Bergens to the flight deck.

Her new role doubling up as Ocean means she is expected to carry up to 20 helicopters and 600 Royal Marines on deployment.

Capt Kyd said: "Illustrious has served as helicopter carrier before but we are now looking in more detail at the routes and processes we use to get troops ready to go."

"It's very exciting to be working on varied roles at such a busy time – there are 750 Naval and Army personnel here doing a great job."

Before exercising with the Apaches, Lusty went through a three-week workout in the North Sea: there were full-power trials to test her engines and propulsion; weapon systems were test-fired and communications; radars and computer systems all received a thorough assessment; and, most importantly of all, aircraft were back aboard – Lynx, Sea King and Merlin.

It fell to LA James Batley to guide in the first aircraft to land on Lusty's deck in more than 18 months – a Merlin from the Flying Tigers of 814 Naval Air Squadron in Culdrose.

It was soon joined on Lusty's deck by 815 NAS of Yeovilton who sent a Lynx to help the carrier's Flyco – flying control – and deck team practise the landing and take-off procedures after such a long gap.

It wasn't just about honing those skills, however, as once aboard the helicopters were used to refresh the skills and facilities of the 22,000-tonne warship's air engineers.

Illustrious' Commander Air – the person in charge of air operations on board the warship – Cdr Nigel May was delighted with the throb of Merlin and Lynx on the flight deck once more.

"After a long refit period, the ship's company were keen to receive our first Royal Navy aircraft," he said. "The arrival of both aircraft on board was a great sight – and the first step in recreating maritime aviation capability from the ship in our regeneration process."

Equally welcome was the sight of 300 or so families waiting for Illustrious when she made her

return to Portsmouth Naval Base for the first time after so long in Rosyth.

"My magnificent crew have worked for many months away from family and friends, some for 18 months, and our return is testament to their

characteristic professionalism and commitment," said Capt Kyd.

"I know I speak for all the men and women in Lusty, when I say that we are looking forward greatly to meeting whatever challenges the government sets us in the coming years."

Merlins and Argus home

HELICOPTER training ship RFA Argus and her three 820 NAS Merlin helicopters have completed a varied four-month stint in the Mediterranean and Gulf of Aden.

The Culdrose fliers and air engineers deployed with 36 hours' notice to assist in the operation to evacuate civilians from Libya.

Their ship then spent a further ten weeks at high readiness to conduct contingent operations if called upon.

Throughout the period the ship-helicopter combination made a significant contribution to maritime security by mounting anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden.

Argus' presence, combined with the ability to search large areas of the busy sea lanes in this area using the Merlin trio, ensured that no ships were seized by pirates in her patrol areas throughout the auxiliary's time off the Horn of Africa.

The helicopters flew for more than 360 hours – well over two whole weeks – and conducted well over 400 deck landings while aboard Argus, which also doubles up as a casualty treatment ship in times of conflict.

"820's short-notice deployment on board Argus demonstrated the ability of the Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Navy to respond quickly and professionally to changing political climates around the globe," said the squadron's Commanding Officer Cdr Jason Phillips.

"I am extremely proud of all the Squadron personnel, who have worked tremendously hard throughout the deployment period, a product of which ensured no vessels were 'pirated' in our patrol areas throughout our time with Argus."

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771's 'Grade A' rescue

TWO Dutch yachtsmen owe their lives to the fliers of 771 Naval Air Squadron after a dramatic rescue in a gale 100 miles off Cornwall.

Aircrewman Sgt Tony Russell RM was forced to dive into the Atlantic and under a liferaft to haul one of the sailors to safety after the men had abandoned the Andrietta some 75 miles southwest of the Scilly Isles.

The yachtsmen sent an SOS when their boat's engine failed, her sails were damaged and they were unable to steer.

When a Sea King from the Culdrose-based Search and Rescue squadron arrived on the scene, its crew decided the mountainous seas, strong winds and the violent pitching and yawing of the yacht made it too dangerous to winch the Andrietta's crew off the boat.

Instead, they decided the safest method was for the sailors to get in the raft from where Sgt Russell could lift them safely.

Which he did with the first sailor, but when it came to rescuing the second yachtsman, the raft capsized, throwing the sailor into the sea.

There was no sign of the second Dutchman, so after searching the waters around the liferaft, the Royal Marine dived underneath, found the sailor – but then had to extricate him from a tangle of ropes and lines.

Once he'd achieved that, the winchman lifted the yachtsman into the safety of the helicopter.

"The job was up there as 'grade A'," said Sgt Russell. "It's a strange thing to say, but I actually enjoyed the experience – although there were times when I thought my time was up."

The two sailors he saved were unhurt, but shaken by their ordeal. Their yacht did not founder and was eventually brought back to harbour.

Saints intervene after act of God

THIS is the dramatic moment a crewman from a stricken merchant ship was lifted to safety – one of 13 sailors plucked from the foundering vessel by Royal Navy aviators off Oman.

All souls aboard the tanker MV Pavit were winched off by a Merlin from HMS St Albans, as the Portsmouth frigate broke off from a maritime security sweep of the Arabian Sea.

The Pavit spent three days without any power, her crew were suffering badly from sea sickness, the ship was being battered by storms, and the pumps were struggling to keep the water at bay.

Her master flashed an SOS which was passed on to the Type 23 frigate via Falmouth Coastguard, asking for his ill sailors to be lifted off.

"This was a desperate situation for the crewmen on board, who had been without engines for three days in severe weather conditions, and reported that several crew members had fallen seriously ill," said Falmouth Coastguard watch manager Alan Loveday.

The Saint scrambled her 829 Naval Air Squadron Merlin with the ship's medical officer on board to offer assistance to the 21-year-old tanker's crew.

When the helicopter arrived on the scene, the merchantman's master decided all souls aboard should be rescued as the 2,000-tonne vessel looked in imminent danger of foundering.

It fell to aircrewman PO 'H' Henson from Whitehaven to go down on the wire and pick up the 13 sailors as the Pavit moved violently in the bad weather.

"We're glad that we could help the ship's crew. They were relieved to see us and

it was good to be able to get them all off safely," he said.

"The conditions were demanding; the stricken vessel was pitching and rolling in heavy seas.

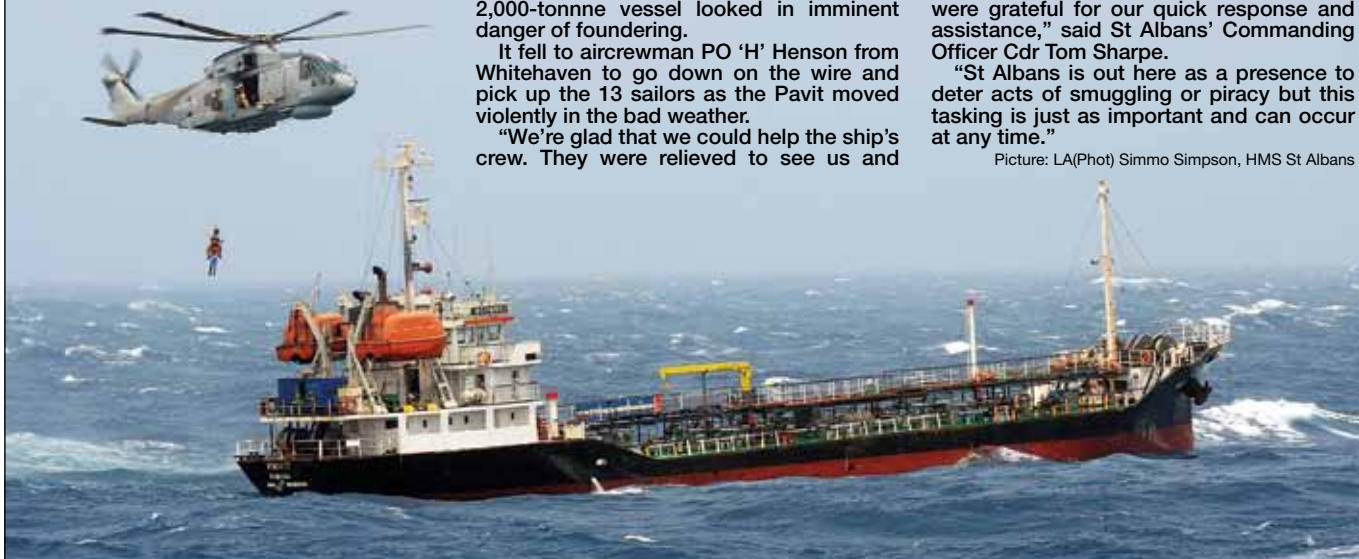
"It's times like these when your training kicks in and you have confidence in the kit, the helicopter and the aircrew."

The ill crewmen were treated and all the Pavit's personnel were transferred to their sister ship MV Jag Pushpa nearby which was coming to their aid.

"As fellow mariners, if we are in a position to render assistance to a stricken vessel requesting our help, then we will do. The monsoon-induced sea state had not been kind to the MV Pavit and with no power and taking on water, her master and the crew were grateful for our quick response and assistance," said St Albans' Commanding Officer Cdr Tom Sharpe.

"St Albans is out here as a presence to deter acts of smuggling or piracy but this tasking is just as important and can occur at any time."

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson, HMS St Albans



Umbango on the Congo

THIS huge plume of water and mud marks the end of a German wartime mine, dispatched by Royal Navy divers some 70 years after it was dropped off the Essex coast by the Luftwaffe.

The 1,500lb device was dredged up by the vessel Congo River about seven miles off Walton-on-the-Naze.

A team from Southern Diving Unit 2 in Portsmouth were faced with an initial precarious task of detaching the parachute mine from the Congo River before laying it safely on the sea bed.

They then had to wait for a safe weather window to send a diver down to the device and attach explosives.

Lt Al Nekreus who led an eight-man team during the operation said the controlled explosion created a 300-ft plume.

"The weather and sea state in the region were extremely poor for a few days but thankfully it improved a lot yesterday and we were able to crack on with the task," he added.

"The mine was in excellent condition – in fact it was still shiny – but the dredger had pierced its skin so this was a delicate task for the team.

"These type of devices are not uncommon, particularly in that part of the world."

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'You could feel the affection in the air...'

THE first – and most prestigious – member of the 'HMS Gloucester Fan Club' was the guest of honour as the Fighting G retired from the Fleet.

The Duchess of Gloucester was joined by 240 sailors, plus families, friends and affiliates all bidding farewell to one of the greatest names in the annals of Royal Navy history.

The duchess has followed the destroyer's progress avidly since she launched her in Southampton in November 1982.

It was rather warmer 29 years later as she inspected the Guard of Honour and chatted with ship's company, thanking them for their commitment.

She was the very first member – of many – of the 'HMS Gloucester Fan Club', who were praised by the destroyer's final Commanding Officer, Cdr David George, for their love and support for the Fighting G over three decades.

"This is a sad day for everyone who has known and loved HMS Gloucester, but we are really seeing her

off in style. We were delighted to have been joined by so many of her fan club," he said.

"The Duchess of Gloucester lent us her support yet again, and we were also joined by the two surviving veterans of the World War II HMS Gloucester – which was fabulous – and all our own former ship's company and their guests.

"You could feel the affection in the air, and it has been a wonderful way to bid farewell to a fine and brave lady, who is going out with real dignity."

Gloucester's demise comes at the end of her natural working life, with the Type 45 destroyers taking on the duties of safeguarding the Fleet from air attack.

The Fighting G's passing leaves just three Type 42s left from a class of 14 built for the Royal Navy between 1970 and 1985. Two of the three remaining vessels – Liverpool and Edinburgh are on active service right now, while York has just returned from a stint in the South Atlantic..



Baggers drive 1,000 daggers into insurgents' heart

THIS is the unmistakable silhouette of a 'Bagger' Sea King flying low over the sands of Helmand as the Naval helicopters completed their 1,000th mission in Afghanistan – and helped drive another dagger into the heart of the insurgency.

Drugs with a street value of £2m have been seized thanks to the 'eyes in the sky' – the latest in a spring and summer of successes for the naval aviators based at Camp Bastion, the hub of the UK operation in Afghanistan.

In a succession of surveillance flights – from thousands of feet above Helmand the Sea Kings' radars can pinpoint movements on the ground – the helicopters have directed ground troops in to strangle the transport of drugs and weapons, find arms and explosives caches, and stop the free movement of insurgents.

During the most recent concerted effort by the Baggers, over a nine-day operation working with UK ground troops, 1,200kg (1.3 tons) of wet opium – used to make heroin – was captured. It's estimated the drugs were worth US \$3.2m on the open market – £2m in the UK.

The haul is one of many during the past three months. Recent successes by the Baggers include:

- helping US Marine Corps Cobra gunships and Sea Stallions to strike at drug trafficking in the Marjah district of southern Helmand;
- assisting American marines with the interception of more than 50 vehicles, a number of suspected insurgents and, in one notable incident, the seizure of over 1,900lbs of opium and heroin;
- providing key intelligence to ground troops to seize a ton of opium, a vehicle and the detention of two suspected insurgents;
- feeding Royal Marines and Afghan troops with vital intelligence during Operation Omid Haft to drive insurgents out of a one-time haven southwest of Gereshk;
- directing US marines on to multiple suspicious vehicles, resulting in the seizure of a large quantity of cash, plus almost a ton of opium and the trucks used for smuggling the drugs during Operation Harvest Moon.

The Sea King Mk7 Airborne

Surveillance and Control (ASaC) – known throughout the Navy as Baggers thanks to the distinctive bags which contain their vital radars, and known by Afghans as the 'cloudwalkers' – were dispatched to Afghanistan in May 2009.

Normally based at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall, the aircraft – rotated between the two front-line Bagger squadrons, 854 and 857 – act as 'flying radar stations'.

The aircraft were originally designed to safeguard a naval task group against air attack by tracking incoming enemy aircraft and missiles – but crews quickly found the radars could also follow movements on the ground; the helicopters were used to that effect in Iraq.

Fitted with improved engines and special rotor blades to cope with the demands of flying high above Afghanistan, night vision goggles for the crew and a defensive aids suite, the Baggers are, says Cdr Pat Douglas, Sea King Force Commander, involved "daily in the battle to stem the flow of improvised explosive devices, drugs and people who aim to harm both our forces and the

Afghanistan nationals."

In short, the Sea King Mk7s and their men and women have become "essential to the ongoing fight against the insurgents."

Cdr Douglas added: "Following information gained from our Sea Kings, UK and

Coalition forces have stopped many tonnes of material used to make improvised explosive devices.

"Each of these successful interceptions means that fewer bombs will be planted in Afghanistan – making it a safer place for both our troops and

the Afghan people.

"Since May 2009, Culdrose Sea Kings have been operating continuously in Afghanistan, they are able to search huge areas very swiftly and watch the movements of vehicles and suspect targets over a wide area."

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PASS the sick bag...

If you think the weather in Blighty has been a bit unseasonal recently, spare a thought for the 240 souls aboard HMS Edinburgh.

This is the South Atlantic (almost) at its most unforgiving as the Fortress of the Sea ploughed south-west for the Falklands from South Africa.

The Portsmouth-based destroyer faced some mountainous seas on the 4,000-mile passage from Cape Town to Mare Harbour, her base for the next five or so months as she patrols Britain's South Atlantic territories.

We're told that all on board the Type 42 suffered at the hands of Nature, but Lt John Jackson steadied his nerve to capture this wall of water seen through the bridge window.

It was a far cry from the rather benign weather the ship experienced in Cape Town where even in the depths of the austral winter, it's typically in the mid-60s°F by day.

Aside from giving her ship's company a break after a lengthy sail down the West African seaboard, the chief reason for the visit to South Africa's famous port was to support British defence firms at a trade and industry day.

The companies used the destroyer as the backdrop for their displays and demonstration of their products to members of the South African Armed Forces and government.

Meanwhile, one fifth of the ship's company made the 20-mile trip to Simon's Town, home of the South African Navy, who were holding their Navy Winter Sports Day.

Edinburgh's sailors were invited to take part in six events, including basketball, rugby and netball. Honours were even between the two nations as each was victorious in three of the disciplines.

There were also opportunities for Edinburgh's sailors to explore the Western Cape, including climbing Table Mountain and the (strangely) popular winemaking region of Stellenbosch.

"Cape Town has a long history of supporting vessels on lengthy ocean passages and I was glad to see that the welcome is as warm as ever," said Edinburgh's Commanding Officer, Cdr Paul Russell.

"The Royal Navy also has an historic association with the South African Navy and it was great to be able to reaffirm those links as well."

The ship's now safely in the Falklands where temperatures are just above freezing and the wind is, as ever, relentless.

When her duties in the Falklands and South Georgia are done, Edinburgh will carry out a number of high-profile visits in South America, the Caribbean and the USA, before sailing home to Portsmouth in time for Christmas.



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HMS Echo stepped up to the mark when she was charged with leading the nation's flagship in for a beach assault as week-long exercises with the United Arab Emirates reached their climax.

The Devonport-based hydrographic vessel – six months into a two-year deployment east of Suez, where she is updating navigational charts in some of the world's busiest and most important shipping routes – was sent into the South Yasat Channel to see whether these waters, to the west of Abu Dhabi, were suitable for HMS Albion.

Albion, Britain's flagship and the lead vessel of the Cougar 11 deployment, was in charge of the Royal Navy's participants in Sea Khanjar (Sea Dagger), the latest exercise involving the task group which has deployed to the Mediterranean and Middle East.

Echo hosted a small group of green berets – known as the pre-landing force – who carry out reconnaissance of potential landing sites.

As Sea Khanjar got down to business, Echo received an urgent request from Albion to escort her through the South Yasat Channel to land a force of Royal

Marines and their UAE counterparts for a simulated amphibious assault.

The channel was last surveyed 20 years ago and the Fleet flagship was willing to take no chances. The narrow waterway is surrounded by unsurveyed shallows and subject to ever-shifting sandbanks and coral. With a navigable route 200 yards wide and as shallow as 12 metres (39ft) in parts, there was little room for error.

Echo set out to produce a Rapid Environmental Assessment (REA) using her state-of-the-art multi-beam echo sounder to establish the depth of water and create a 3D image of the topography, establishing a corridor of safe navigational water for HMS Albion to follow.

Within a matter of hours the survey was complete and the data transmitted to Albion, uploaded directly to their electronic navigation system.

To prove Echo had confidence in its findings, she then carefully led the 18,000-tonne assault ship through the freshly-surveyed waters, using both radio and flashing lights to provide the speed and positional directions necessary to ensure HMS Albion remained along the centreline, whilst continuing to monitor her safety with her survey suite.

"It is not a common occurrence for a survey ship navigator to lead the Fleet's flagship through confined and relatively-unsurveyed waters," said Lt Marc Taylor, Echo's navigator.

"The mind is somewhat focused when the shoals are real and not for exercise, and it was certainly a highlight of Sea Khanjar to provide such a service."



Diamond 'itching' to sparkle

HALF the Navy's latest destroyer fleet is now officially 'active' with HMS Diamond formally entering service following extensive trials.

The third of six Type 45 warships, designed to shield the Navy from air attack, Diamond has reached her 'in service date' – which means all the hi-tech kit aboard the 8,000-tonne warship is ready for active duties.

The Portsmouth-based destroyer, currently undergoing training off Plymouth, has already been handed over to the RN and been commissioned (the latter is more of a 'welcome to the Naval family' than an operational milestone).

And although D34 is officially 'in service' she's not yet ready to deploy – but that's not long off. She's still to pass the rigours of Operational Sea Training and prove that her main armament, her Sea Viper anti-air missile system, works with a test firing on a range.

The ship's air defence radars can track targets in excess of 400 kilometres (250 miles) – which means sitting in Portsmouth Harbour Diamond can follow

aircraft on the flight path to Schiphol airport at Amsterdam... and Charles de Gaulle in Paris... and Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds... well, you get the picture.

According to the specifications, in theory the 45s should be able to bring down a target no bigger than a cricket ball travelling at Mach 3.

Cdr Ian Clarke, Diamond's Commanding Officer, said his 180 men and women were "itching to get on to a more operational footing" just nine months after the destroyer left the yard of her builder, BAE Systems, on the Clyde.

He added: "The ship's company is rightly pleased to have reached this milestone and is now focused firmly on the forthcoming period of intense combat training in preparation for our first deployment."

"HMS Diamond will soon be at immediate notice to respond to world events and bring influence

wherever it is needed."

As D34 officially takes her place in the line of battle, eight of her ship's company, led by Cdr Clarke, headed to Holland to honour a previous Diamond – and the Dutch liner she tried to protect in vain.

Seventy years ago, the 14th HMS Diamond – also a D-class destroyer – was committed to Operation Demon, the evacuation of Allied troops from Greece after the Germans overran the Balkan peninsula and Peloponnese in just three weeks.

Diamond and another destroyer, Wryneck, were dispatched to the Gulf of Nauplia, 60 miles south-west of Athens, to shepherd the SS Slammat, a Dutch liner turned troop transporter, safely to Crete.

The Luftwaffe fatally bombed the Slammat, but Diamond was able to rescue 600 men from the crippled ship.

Just a few hours later, however, she suffered the same fate. Attacked by German bombers,

It was a service much appreciated by Albion's bridge team, among them second navigator Lt Simon Shaw.

"In years gone by such a task would have involved reams of paper charts and would have taken days. The fact that HMS Echo was able to survey the channel, plot a course and send us the data electronically within hours of receiving our request was fantastic."

"This transit also provided an excellent training opportunity in ship handling for some of the young officers onboard."

Back aboard Echo, Executive Officer Lt Cdr Trefor Fox was delighted at his ship's chance to join in a major international exercise.

"The way the ship's company responded to the request for survey data and led the Fleet Flagship through the South Yasat Channel is something I am particularly proud of," he added.

"It is a testament to Echo and the ship's company that we have shown the flexibility to switch from our core role of painstaking and precise hydrographic surveying, to supporting the pre-landing force, conducting a rapid environmental assessment, survey operations and undertaking escort duties all concurrently. In doing so, we have demonstrated the versatility of this extremely potent and capable ship."

"Understanding and exploiting the environment has always been key to any maritime operation. This is particularly important in amphibious operations, where ships and troops operate in confined and shallow waters, sometimes with little or no previous knowledge of the environment."

Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright, HMS Albion



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From flagship to tanker

IF YOU want an idea just how big the nation's flagship is, then this photograph of her 'rafted up' with HMS Middleton goes a good way to providing the answer.

The reason for the link up between the assault ship and the Hunt-class minehunter wasn't to show HMS Albion's size, rather her versatility.

With no tanker present during Exercise Sea Khanjar off the United Arab Emirates and with Middleton running low on fuel, it was time to test Albion's ability to double up as an auxiliary and transfer black gold from 'large' to 'little'.

Albion displaces more than 20 times the 750 tonnes of Middleton, which is on a long-term deployment to the Gulf in support of Allied operations and regional navies, based out of Bahrain.

Indeed, the main mast of

Middleton just peeks over the flight deck of Albion. Not so the bridge, which looks out on to nothing but the grey, forbidding starboard side of the flagship.

As for the minehunter's bow, well with the stern in line with Albion's dock gates, it just reaches the back of the assault ship's superstructure.

So 'parking' Middleton alongside demanded some pretty skilful manoeuvring from both bridge teams and expert seamanship from deck hands.

"It's not every day you get to drive up to the Fleet flagship to top up your fuel," said AB(D) Matthew Coburn.

"Though it presented a few more challenges than simply nipping to your local garage forecourt, we all rose to the task and learned a number of valuable lessons."

Among the latter was that Albion's got a lot more fuel to offer than your average Esso, Shell or BP filling station; her tanks can take her from home (Devonport) to the Falklands (8,000-plus miles) without requiring topping up (whereas Middleton's limited to 1,500 miles – or Portsmouth-Gibraltar), so topping up the minehunter didn't pose a drain on resources.

When not alongside her much bigger sister, Middleton was at the forefront of Sea Khanjar, carrying out searches for mines with fellow Gulf minehunting stalwart HMS Pembroke ahead of the main

amphibious assault involving Royal Marines and their counterparts from the United Arab Emirates.

"Sea Khanjar was a valuable experience – it provided excellent training for Middleton and her team," said the ship's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Adam Ingham.

"It also gave us the chance to prove that mine countermeasures vessels can integrate into an amphibious operation.

"Our rafting with Albion demonstrated – and proved – an important capability: we can remain on task for extended periods while within range of an assault ship."

Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright, HMS Albion



Engineers' vital MCMV support

WE MAKE a great deal of fuss about the exertions of Royal Navy minehunters in the Gulf and the exercises they carry out (eg left) – those waters remain, after all, the focal point of the surface fleet's present efforts.

And they'd largely count for nought without two dozen or so unsung sailors in Bahrain who provide constant engineering support.

Two maintenance teams take it in turns to look after the four mine countermeasures vessels based in Mina Salman port – two Hunts (Middleton and Chiddingfold) and two Sandowns (Pembroke and Grimsby).

Forward Support Unit 1 has just completed its four months in Bahrain and returned home to Portsmouth... and Forward Support Unit 2 has taken its place with daily temperatures now reaching 38°C (100°F).

During their four-month tour in the Gulf state, FSU 1 carried out work on the quartet of ships equivalent to a 19-week maintenance period, repaired hulls, carried out structural repairs, fixed communications kit, sensors and weapons, and changed main engines.

All of which is demanding in itself, but the most recent deployment has been made more challenging because of reduced support for the RN team from local civilians as a result of this year's unrest in Bahrain.

While one forward support team is out in the Gulf, another, FSU 2, operates out of SFM (Superintendent Fleet Maintenance) Portsmouth.

It's the task of its 27 engineering experts to provide support to exercises, other deployed Hunts and Sandowns, attend professional courses and, where time allows, grab some leave.

Just as the Bahrain unit's been hectic, so too its UK-based counterparts... who've spent a fair amount of time overseas themselves.

After helping out on exercise Joint Warrior in Scotland, some of the unit's members deployed at short notice to Taranto in southern Italy to change HMS Brocklesby's main engine – so the minehunter could continue her mission off Libya. That 'Italian job' was turned around in just three days.

A few weeks later and the engineers were back in the eastern Med, this time Limassol in Cyprus where HMS Ramsey received a new generator within 48 hours as she made the lengthy journey from Faslane to Bahrain.

"In recent months, against a backdrop of increasingly high-tempo operational requirements, each unit has faced considerable challenges in testing conditions," said Lt Tex Saw, Forward Support Unit Officer.

"The experienced – and dynamic – teams both in Bahrain and Portsmouth have risen constantly to those challenges, delivering engineering support wherever duty calls. You can be sure that the forward support units stand ready to deliver engineering to the Royal Navy's mine countermeasures vessels wherever and whenever it is required around the world."



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Much achieved, much more to go

IT IS not often that a ship is taken up from trade to serve in the fleet.

Even less frequently is the ship so different to Pusser's Greys that it requires a complete rewrite of damage control training procedures by Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST).

Ice patrol ship HMS Protector is just such a ship, and the learning curve has been steep as she prepares for her first deployment in Antarctica for the austral summer in November.

In only three short months since being chartered from Norwegian firm GC Rieber, the ship has undergone an amazing transition.

RN-approved fire fighting equipment now lines corridors, signage is correct to MOD standards, and drills are slick and well-practised.

Oh, and the flight deck has switched ends...

To cope with the influx of new equipment and routines, the crew has been drilling tirelessly throughout July, with their efforts being recognised with a 'safe for sea' rating for both 'Fast Cruise' and Initial Sea Safety Training.

"HMS Protector's schedule has been extremely challenging but very rewarding over the past few months," said her first Commanding Officer, Capt Peter Sparkes.

"Though the crew integrated well with the Rieber staff when the ship was chartered, their greatest development has undoubtedly been the last few weeks of training.

"I am delighted with their progress to date."

As if to fill an already-busy schedule even further, she was visited by the Rear Admiral

S/Lt Sam Balmont, currently on aviation holdover, was invited onboard HMS Protector for ten days to develop his sea experience while building upon material covered in the Initial Fleet Time component of officer training. Here is his view of life on board the new ice patrol ship

and Head of the Uruguayan Coast Guard, together with the Uruguayan defence attaché to the UK, who came on board to observe her training drills.

One laboratory fire and steering gear breakdown later, and both guests departed Protector thoroughly impressed by the capability of the ship and her crew.

During these demonstrations, the weather deteriorated to a 'challenging' sea state 5, forcing the ship to come alongside to disembark her guests.

But before entering harbour she was able to demonstrate the precision of her propulsion and thrusters, which includes an azimuth (essentially an up-scaled outboard propeller that can rotate 360° under the ship's hull for precision manoeuvring) and thrusters, which are able to hold her to within 50 cm of a designated position in all but the roughest sea states.

With this in mind, it is hardly surprising that in a previous life she provided long-term overflow accommodation for deep-sea oil rigs, most recently in the Caribbean.

Despite the best efforts of the crew to adapt to the unique civilian systems, in some areas improvisation is very much the norm.

The meteorologist, for example, works out of a chacon – a portable storage unit – in the lower hold due to the lack of dedicated office space.

"You would think a METO needs a window to do his job," said LS(Met) David Goldsworthy.

"It helps – but having the dedicated space will be better."

Even the wardroom presented a series of challenges.

Under Rieber, the ship was entirely 'dry' (inside, at least), as a consequence of which the wardroom lacked a bar.

"There was nothing in our budget for a bar, so we trailed over to HMS Manchester with a few hammers and screwdrivers and borrowed hers," said the ice ship's Gunnery Officer, Lt Max Parsonson.

"It is nice to know that a little bit of her lives on with us."

Protector not being fully fitted with Pusser's own equipment, her ship's company are learning to improvise their daily working routine too, as acknowledged by recently-appointed Executive Officer Cdr Don Mackinnon.

"We have recently learned that if we get stuck in the ice, we can rock ourselves free by swinging the crane from side to side, much

like rocking a car to get it out of mud," he said.

Even navigation has to be approached differently, owing to the absence of a centre-line pelorus, the sighting compass device on a ship used for taking the relative bearings of a distant object.

Protector's Navigation Officer Lt Rob Ayrton described the difficulties that can arise from such a setup.

"You have to be constantly aware of the width of the ship," he said.

"The difference in position between the peloruses – about ten metres – does generate a lot of extra work."

As *Navy News* went to press, HMS Protector was undergoing

the installation of scientific equipment prior to her first six-month deployment to the South Atlantic and Southern Ocean.

Another landmark in her fledgling Navy career was passed when she was commissioned at a ceremony on the Victory Jetty at Portsmouth Naval Base.

The date – June 23 – was significant, as it marked the 50th anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty coming into force, protecting the pristine environment below 60° South and preventing any kind of conflict on the frozen continent.

Like her predecessors – including HMS Endurance, whose role she temporarily assumes while the Red Plum's future is decided – Protector will help police the Treaty, which places non-intrusive scientific research at the top of the agenda.

Her mission is specifically "to patrol and survey the Antarctic and South Atlantic, maintaining sovereign presence with defence diplomacy and supporting the



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● This page: Clockwise from top right: MV Polarbjørn transits the Kiel Canal on her way to her refit at the Fayard shipyard in Munkbo, near Odense in Denmark; the flight deck is removed from her bridge roof, ready to be refitted astern, while her old name has been painted out; half of Protector's ship's company line up in front of their new-look ship, which is still in dry dock but ready to be marked up as HMS Protector (A173), with Commanding Officer Capt Peter Sparkes at the front; Capt Sparkes and the ship's engineers take a close look beneath Protector's keel; Capt Sparkes in reflective mood as the ship visits Bergen in Norway; three members of the ship's company look over the bows as MV Polarbjørn enters dry dock in Odense

Pictures: LA(Phot) Arron Hoare

more to do...

global community of Antarctica," using Mare Harbour in the Falklands as her 'home port' while on deployment.

A previous patrol ship to the deep south also went by the name of Protector, and a contingent from her thriving ship association were there to see the latest version commissioned.

Also watching were Sea Cadets from Dunstable, Cambridge, Bedford, Biggleswade and Long Eaton units.

During the commissioning ceremony, carried out by the Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Scott Brown, Capt Sparkes said: "It is also resonant that today in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the 28 nations that are responsible for ensuring that Antarctica is used exclusively for peaceful purposes are meeting to discuss the future of the continent.

"This ceremony is a timely re-affirmation of the UK's

continued commitment to the South Atlantic and British Antarctic Territories.

"There is no more capable ship or dedicated ship's company for this important role."

Capt Sparkes said much hard work had gone into Protector's transformation from Antarctic expeditionary and offshore vessel into warship, but there was still much to be done.

"We will seek to improve the way in which we work together – drilling teams in cold weather operations, man overboard practice, navigation, machinery breakdowns and damage control," he said.

"We need to. Where we are going we need to be self-sufficient, capable of looking after ourselves, and potentially others, thousands of miles from the nearest help, in the most challenging maritime environment in the world – Antarctica and the Southern Oceans."



At either end of Victory Jetty were two of the three BV206 tracked all-terrain carriers which the ship will carry south to be used on the ice and snow of Antarctica; she will also carry Land Rovers and quad bikes.

There was also a new survey motor boat, James Caird IV, which was named by the CO's wife, Karen Sparkes.

Mrs Sparkes went on to cut the traditional commissioning cake with the youngest member of the ship's company, AB (Sea) Nathan Turnbull, 21 (below left).

Mrs Sparkes is a biology teacher at Portsmouth Grammar School – which sent a party of Combined Cadet Force Naval Contingent cadets along to the ceremony, along with headmaster James Priory.

The school will be keeping close tabs on Protector as it is believed to be the first formal affiliation between PGS and a warship.

The links don't end there – Bob Smith, the father of LS(HM) Chris Smith (a member of the ship's company), is the school's permanent CCF instructor.

Other notable guests included the ship's lady sponsor, Mrs Beverley Mathews – who named the ship in a small ceremony on June 1 – and her husband Vice Admiral Andrew Mathews, the Navy's Chief of Materiel (Fleet).

As the guests made their way

● **Right: The ship's company on Victory Jetty during the commissioning ceremony**

into the refreshments marquee, serenaded by the Royal Marines Band Portsmouth, they were greeted by the sight of paintings of the old and new Protectors.

They were the work of artist Ross Watton – creator of several *Navy News* cutaway posters – who was officially commissioned to portray the new vessel in Antarctica (paintings above, see www.navalbroadside.co.uk for details of Ross' work).

The paintings were well-received by the ship, which has requested



125 mounted prints to present to the men and women of Protector.

The commission was familiar territory to Ross, who over the past 20 years has produced many stamps for British Antarctic Territories, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, including the former HMS Protector 1936-68.

Having never been that far south, Ross had to use one of his 3D computer models and his imagination to create the picture, as when he received the

commission the ship was still MV Polarbjørn with her flight deck atop the bridge.

He only saw the real thing on the commissioning day.

The second Protector painting, which is on loan to the new ship, also caused a stir in the HMS Protector Association.

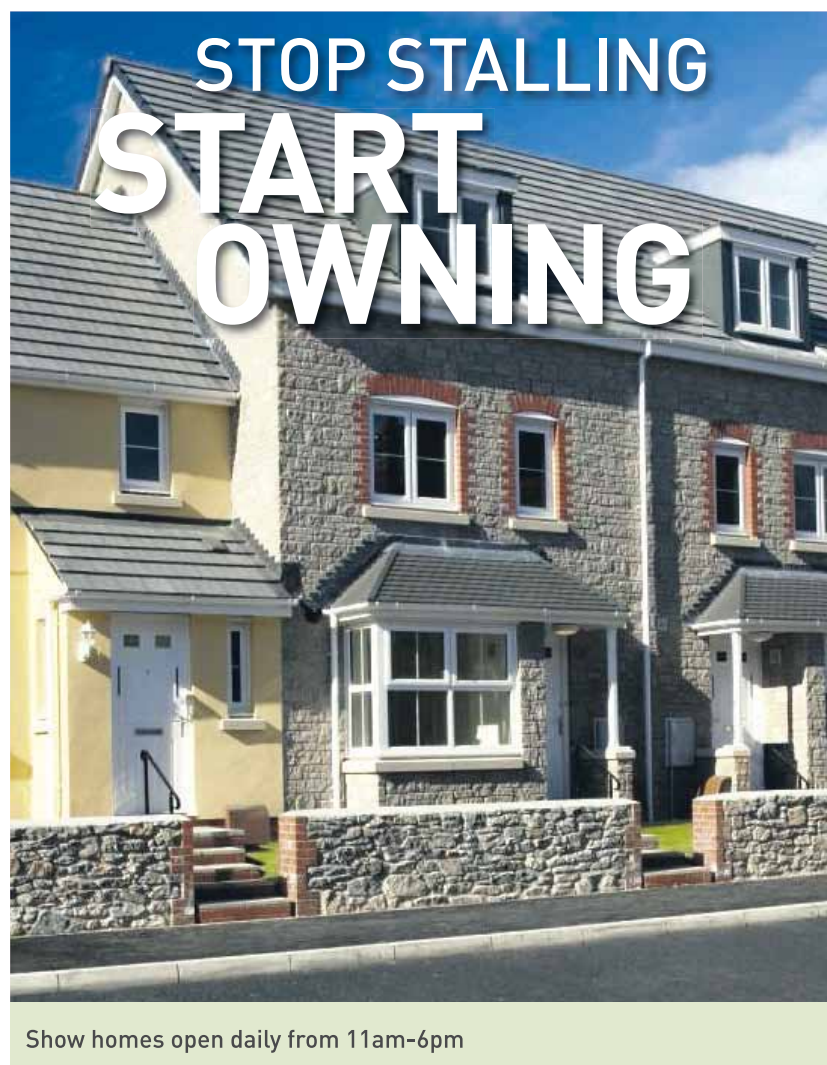
Ross said: "I've wanted to do a 'proper painting' of the old girl for a long time, having portrayed her at stamp size in the past, and I thought this would be a good opportunity."



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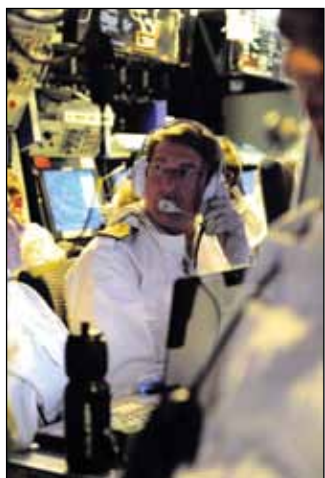
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Hammering Gaddafi – by day and night

ON THE left a high-explosive shell leaves the barrel of HMS Liverpool's main 4.5in gun – on its way to blowing up one of Colonel Gaddafi's gunboats...

...and on the right a high-explosive shell leaves the barrel of HMS Iron Duke's main 4.5in gun – on its way to silencing an artillery battery.

These are just two of a series of blows to the Tripoli regime dealt this past month by Royal Navy personnel committed around the clock on Operation Unified Protector, a steel dragnet drawn across the Gulf of Sirte by NATO warships – and a rain of steel brought down on government forces by Allied air power.

Liverpool twice thwarted two sorties by pro-Gaddafi gunboats from Zlitan harbour – in the second incident blowing up one of the speedboats.

On the initial occasion four boats tried to head along the coast towards the rebel-held city of Misrata, but were intercepted by the Portsmouth-based destroyer.

They (eventually) heeded the warning shots fired by her 4.5in gun and scurried back to Zlitan, still held by government troops.

Days later, three more boats decided to venture forth – and again Liverpool was waiting for them.

She closed to within eight miles of the Libyan coast, confirmed the patrol plane's sightings and took action to force the boats back to port.

After repeated warnings, which were ignored by the three ribs, Liverpool took the next step – a shot across the bow.

Two of Gaddafi's boats took the hint and fled back to harbour, the

third remained off the coast briefly before its crew also decided to run the craft ashore.

At that point Liverpool cleared her gun again and fired high explosive rounds – hurtling through the air at more than twice the speed of sound – blasting the beached RIB to kingdom come.

The actions with the Gaddafi gunboats were the most dramatic of Liverpool's first three months on patrol off Libya – but they're the tip of the proverbial iceberg of this demanding mission.

Indeed, the destroyer has already clocked up more than 25,000 miles on her first 113 days away from Portsmouth (such mileage is more usual for a six-month deployment...).

To sustain such a demanding mission (Type 42s are thirsty beasts), the ship has replenished 17 times – roughly once a week.

The main gun has expended 99 rounds – 43 high explosive, 56 star shells – providing naval gunfire support, illumination, and firing warning shots.

As a result the ship's company has been to action stations on 16 occasions.

But after three months almost constantly on Unified Protector duties, the Crazy Red Chicken – and her men and women – were permitted a short break in Taranto (which also permitted some maintenance on the ship following her exertions).

Stepping into her shoes was HMS Iron Duke – on her way home from the Gulf.

She immediately found herself thrust into three days and nights of the most intensive action off Libya in recent weeks.

The frigate lit the way for Allied jets to take out regime rocket positions near Zlitan, while her high explosive shells silenced a gun battery outside Misrata.

Iron Duke was returning from a five-month stint in the Gulf when she was diverted to the Unified Protector mission – and found herself in the line of fire almost immediately.

Her 4.5in Kryn timer gun fired star shells over Zlitan which lit up the desert and made it possible for NATO aircraft to accurately target regime positions, including two rocket launchers.

The pressure was maintained on government troops the following night when helicopter carrier HMS Ocean sent her Army Air Corps Apaches against regime forces oppressing the people of the small port of Al Khums, with Bagger Sea Kings providing radar cover.

The gunships eliminated a vehicle checkpoint and half a dozen buildings which previous NATO surveillance missions had identified as military targets. Hellfire missiles fired by the helicopters wiped them out.

Twenty miles to the east, star shells from Iron Duke again illuminated the terrain around Zlitan as NATO forces carried out surveillance missions.

The third day of action was focused at Zlitan. RAF jets attacked more than two dozen buildings following lengthy intelligence gathering, smashing command and control centres, ammunition and fuel dumps, as well as five multiple rocket launchers and some heavy infantry weapons.

While the air force was eliminating those targets, Iron Duke replaced star shells with high explosive and silenced a government artillery battery. The frigate observed the guns firing into Misrata and promptly responded.

When darkness fell again, Ocean's Apaches were once more

dispatched to Al Khums and destroyed two large sheds used to store military vehicles.

In addition to the strikes around Zlitan, Ocean and her gunships were in demand in Gaddafi's backyard.

Nearly a dozen targets – checkpoints and numerous military vehicles, including a multiple-barrelled rocket launcher – were blasted to bits by the attack helicopters to the west of Tripoli.

The Apaches were launched following an intensive surveillance operation of a 40-mile stretch of the Libyan coastal strip between Zuwarah and Az Zawiyah, just two dozen miles west of Tripoli.

Once again Baggers from the Mighty O provided crucial radar surveillance for the Apache mission, while NATO jets provided 'top cover'.

The Apaches targeted three vehicle checkpoints, which had been located during previous aerial reconnaissance missions and were being used to curb the movements of ordinary Libyans.

At each checkpoint, military vehicles and structures were identified – and promptly destroyed by the chain gun and Hellfire missiles of the Apaches, as were infantry positions.

In all, four military structures and seven vehicles were destroyed during the mission.

Around 17 warships and auxiliaries were committed to the NATO mission as we went to press, 'hailing' – ie checking the identity – of around ten ships off Libya daily.



pictures: la(photos) james crawford, caroline davies and guy pool

SHIPS OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.654

By strength and Argyll

BACK and ready to take her place among the ships of the front-line Fleet is the oldest and – thanks to a £20m year-long revamp – most potent frigate.

It took 13 months to turn an inanimate, largely lifeless, hull in the middle of a refit into a cutting-edge warship ready for anything that global events and nature can throw at her.

Nine months after emerging from that comprehensive makeover in Rosyth, the Devonport-based frigate came through her final, acid test: Operational Sea Training.

And passed, like she has done every trial and inspection this past year or so “with flying colours”.

Argyll began to ‘crew up’ in earnest in May 2010 – four months before her refit was due to conclude.

Just shy of 300,000 man hours were devoted to the ship's refit as the Type 23 frigate received the latest version of Seawolf, a new command system, one new main gas turbine, two generators, and the MOD's latest e-mail and internet system, DII(F).

She emerged from that refit three days ahead of schedule – and has maintained that impressive pace throughout the long road back to front-line duties.

It all came to a head with two months in the hands of the Flag Officer Sea Training instructors and assessors this spring/summer.

A large part of the training consisted of simulated battles on a daily basis whether externally with enemy missiles, aircraft, ships and submarines or internally with fires, floods and machinery breakdowns – most of which occurred simultaneously on Thursdays on the infamous ‘Thursday War’.

The final phase of training was specific to the role that Argyll

will perform for real towards the end of the year when she deploys east of Suez on maritime security patrols.

“Argyll is ready, in all respects, to undertake any operational tasking as part of the Fleet,” said her Commanding Officer Cdr Paul Stroude.

“We have achieved this significant milestone with the perseverance, hard work and sheer determination of the crew.

“I am truly proud of the ship's company and the team that delivered her refit. The name of HMS Argyll is now synonymous with professionalism of the highest order.”

Two ships have been named Argyll before today's frigate. You have to go all the way back to the days of Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth of England.

The first Argyll actually began life as the Bonaventure, a 38-gun frigate which was rebuilt frequently in a career which spanned nearly a century.

The ship was 65 years old when she was renamed Argyll shortly before the Jacobite Rising of 1715. After yet another rebuild, the ship saw service in the Atlantic and the War of the Austrian Succession.

When that war ended, the ship was towed to Harwich and sunk as a breakwater, bringing to an end 98 years of service.

The name was resurrected in 1905 by a Devonshire-class armoured cruiser.

Argyll No.2 saw action in the opening months of WW1 – indeed, she captured a German merchantman only two days into the war. She was wrecked in October 1915 when she ran into Bell Rock near Dundee. None of her 650 crew were lost in the grounding, but the ship had to be scuttled.



Battle Honours

Passero.....1718

Class: Type 23 frigate
Pennant number: F231
Builder: Yarrow, Glasgow
Laid down: March 20 1987
Launched: April 8 1989
Commissioned: May 31 1991
Displacement: 4,200 tons
Length: 133 metres (436ft)
Beam: 16.1 metres (53ft)
Draught: 7.3 metres (24ft)
Speed: 28+ knots
Complement: 181
Propulsion: 2 x Rolls-Royce Spey gas turbines generating 31,100hp; 4 x Paxman diesels generating 8,100hp
Armament: 8 x Harpoon anti-surface missiles; Stingray torpedoes; 32 x Seawolf anti-air missiles; 1 x Mod 1 4.5 inch gun; 2 x 30mm close-range anti-surface/anti-aircraft guns; Seagat and decoy launchers
Helicopter: 1 x Merlin or Lynx

Facts and figures

Picture: LA(Phot) Joel Rouse, FRPU East

Celebrating ten years of bespoke radio for the forces



Woodbridge: The rear party of 23 Engineer Regiment and the Woodbridge welfare team mark the tenth birthday with Garrison Radio staff at the launch of the stations latest location.

Employed by the Army to provide a radio service closely tailored to the needs of soldiers and their dependants at UK bases, by the end of this year Garrison Radio will be serving 22 sites on FM and AM radio with a dedicated staff based in each of the major UK garrison areas. The station can also be heard anywhere via the internet and a new iPhone app.

In 2001 Garrison Radio became the

UK's first new military broadcaster since the second world war when we launched permanent AM radio services at Catterick, Colchester and Salisbury Plain. In following years further stations were launched at Aldershot and Edinburgh.

As part of the Trafalgar 200 celebrations in 2005 we ran Navy Radio, as a trial of a dedicated radio station for the senior service.



Afghanistan: Garrison Radio's Liz Mullen with soldiers of 16 Air Assault Brigade, Christmas 2010

Over the next few years the Garrison Radio stations at Colchester, Edinburgh, Salisbury Plain, Aldershot and Catterick were upgraded to FM and new transmitters were launched at Glencorse, Basingbourn, Wattisham, Leconfield and Woodbridge. By 2009 we had launched the

Army's first all-speech station - armytalk.co.uk - via AM radio in Catterick and online worldwide.

Recent independently conducted research found that an impressive 46% of serving soldiers at Aldershot and Catterick regularly listen to Garrison Radio.



Portsmouth: Garrison Radio founder Mark Page in the Navy Radio studio

The world of broadcasting has changed a lot in these ten years with digital devices, laptops, smart phones, iPads etc., but our success has always been built on our close relationship with our audience. We've always specialised in talking about news and events where you

are - relating to individual units and bases - and we think that's the way forward. So tell Mark Page what you need now. What do you miss in the media when you are serving away from home? What could we do better?

Email him: mark@garrisonfm.com



Edinburgh: Mark McKenzie speaks to CGS General Sir David Richards at Armed Forces Day 2010.



www.garrisonfm.com



Picture: PO(Phot) Hamish Burke



Picture: PO(Phot) Hamish Burke



Picture: Cpl Andy Reddy (RLC)

Troops bui

TWO operations by Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade just half a mile apart show both the difficulties the commandos face – and the progress they’re making – in Afghanistan.

While the green berets of Lima Company were locked in a fierce 20-minute fire-fight with insurgents, their 42 Cdo comrades from Mike Company expected a battle as they searched compounds – but found a village largely at peace.

Operation Zamrod Olai was the latest thrust into the northern part of the Nad-e Ali district by the Bickleigh-based commandos – the ‘Smiley Boys’ – alongside Afghan National Army (ANA) and National Police units aimed at driving away the Taleban.

When Mike Company streamed out of a helicopter, they were ready for a fight – less than a month ago the Loy Chek area had been dogged by clashes between green berets and guerrillas, and no Allied or Afghan troops had searched these compounds before.

Mike Company’s Officer Commanding Maj Matthew Parker said he expected his men to come under fire from insurgents and to deal with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) – but the commandos, Royal Engineers and Afghan Army encountered very little, if any, resistance.

“Obviously there is still insurgent activity in this area but the fact that we can show up with 90 blokes on any given morning tells the insurgents there that they can’t expect to do whatever they

want and expect to get away with it,” said Cpl Andy Bain.

With no concrete signs of enemy activity, they concentrated on building bridges with locals and meeting village elders.

“The fact that my company wasn’t fired on and that the Afghan forces were able to spread the influence of the Afghan government, I would say this operation was a success,” said Maj Parker.

“I was actually trying to enjoy tea and a chat with a local elder while I could hear the automatic fire and helicopters in the background. But our meeting continued – they didn’t seem bothered.”

Their colleagues in 45 Cdo can also see signs of better times.

Three months into their fourth tour of duty in Afghanistan, there is a sense of “real hope and welcome progress” in Helmand.

In the latest actions by the Arbroath-based green berets, another region once dominated by insurgents – Zaborabad – has been brought under the control of the Afghan government.

Operation Tor Kanjak, led by Afghan troops with the Royals in support, proved to be one of the less-contested Allied sweeps.

Operating in the south of the Nad-e Ali district, ANA soldiers moved in and cleared numerous IEDs.

45 Cdo’s CO Lt Col Oliver Lee said Tor Kanjak saw no fighting; no locals fled the area, which meant subsequent work by civilian authorities to restore community life could begin immediately.

Aside from major thrusts such as Tor Kanjak, the Royals have been working flat-out supporting initiatives to make the lives of locals better: veterinary care, health care, sporting events, schools and wells built, encouraging Nad-e Ali’s female population.

Working hand-in-hand with the fighting troops are the Female Engagement Teams (FETs), which have become an important asset.

Cultural *mores* prevent male soldiers communicating directly with Afghan women, so a female Allied presence is crucial in building up relationships.

● *This page, from top: Zulu Company 45 Cdo RM on patrol in Zaborabad, Helmand Province; Commander Task Force Helmand Brig Ed Davis shakes hands with Gen Hakim Angar, Helmand’s Head of Police, during ceremonies marking the formal transfer of responsibility for security to local forces in Lashkar Gah; Sgt Dean Smith and Cpl Euan Anderson from the BRF in the crater left after they destroyed insurgents’ explosives; members of the BRF during their raid in Nahr-e Saraj; Zulu Company 45 Cdo patrol Zaborabad*

Picture: Cpl Andy Reddy (RLC)



ild bridges

“There is real cause for optimism. Nad-e Ali South genuinely represents an area in Helmand of real hope and welcome progress. The Herculean efforts of our predecessors and their Afghan partners are bearing fruit and, although not yet there, the progress is becoming difficult for its enemies to reverse.”

But that doesn't mean the bootnecks can relax.

Pictured opposite is the crater left when an elite force of Royals blew up an insurgents' secret ammunition dump, with Sgt Dean Smith and Cpl Euan Anderson of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF) admiring their destructive work after one tonne of home-made explosives was sent sky high.

The BRF – a specialist unit which often operates deep behind enemy lines or well in advance of the main body of 3 Cdo Bde – moved into the Barang district of eastern Helmand with armoured support from the Warthogs of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards.

Intelligence suggested insurgents were using the area to plan attacks, so the BRF and Royal Scots were sent in to thwart them.

As the troops entered the area they came under intense fire, but beat back the enemy then moved forward to discover what their foes had been trying to protect.

Laid out on the ground was a grey slab of home-made explosives – the main ‘ingredient’ used to make the IEDs which have claimed so many casualties among Allied forces and civilians.

“This is one of the biggest single finds of home-made explosives I've ever come across,” said Sgt Smith of 24 Cdo Engineer Regiment, attached to the BRF.

“If you can imagine how much damage a 500lb bomb could do – there was enough here to make three of those. We estimate that it would probably have been used in smaller quantities though, to make up to 150 IEDs.

“No wonder the insurgents were not keen on us stumbling across it – the loss of it will be a major blow for them.”

Once the engineers had analysed the material and recorded the details, the decision was taken to destroy the whole lot.

Just two weeks earlier they had uncovered a bomb-making factory and an insurgent training camp in the Nahr-e Saraj area after a bold daylight raid and an intense firefight with insurgents.

After receiving a tip-off from locals, the BRF arrived at the hideaway in less than two hours.

As soon as the troops emerged from the two Chinooks which dropped them off, they came under heavy and sustained fire.

One of the Chinooks was hit by small arms fire as it pulled away from the drop zone. Its pilot flew through a hail of bullets to put the helicopter down safely close to a nearby Allied checkpoint where the damage was assessed, before flying back to Camp Bastion for repairs.

Back at the compound, the BRF returned fire and called in support from attack helicopters to take out the Taliban positions.

“We were all unsure what to expect as we left Camp Bastion at short notice. But we knew immediately when we landed we must have stumbled upon something significant. It was pretty intense – one of the biggest contacts we've seen this tour,” said Cpl Liam Murphy RM.

The shooting eventually ceased when Royal Marine snipers tracked – and killed – a Taliban sharpshooter. After a brief pause in the fighting, the BRF troops advanced on the compound.

As the surviving insurgents fled, the BRF surveyed their haul.

Inside the booby-trapped compound they found 75 pressure plate devices armed and ready for use, another 40 home-made bombs in the process of being constructed, and 140kg of explosives.

The BRF also uncovered countless radio transmitters – used to trigger IEDs – and more than 30 artillery shells.

Inside the building there was a fortified room which contained even more deadly equipment, but

● *This page, from top right: Sgt Wayne Jackson, a troop sergeant with Mike Company, 42 Cdo, talks with a local man during Operation Zamrod Olai in Nad-e Ali District, Helmand; Juliet Company 42 Cdo on Operation Satunki 2, an Afghan-led sweep of Nad-e Ali which uncovered a number of IEDs hidden in a large haystack; Mne Daniel Nesbitt, a medic with Mike Company, 42 Cdo, humours an Afghan child during a patrol on Operation Zamrod Olai, in Nad-e Ali District; LA Stacey Cameron, a member of the Female Engagement Team currently working with 42 Cdo in Nad-e Ali*

was deemed too dangerous to search, so after items had been removed from the outer compound, the commandos blew it all up.

Back with 42 Cdo, having driven insurgents out of one district of Helmand, the green berets helped clear IEDs from the main route to the provincial capital.

The week-long thrust by the men of Juliet Company and bomb disposal experts from the Royal Engineers – codenamed Zamrod Pak 10 – moved along the road linking Loy Mandeh Kalay with Lashkar Gah.

The troops found and dealt with a dozen bombs, clearing the road for use by military forces and civilians, allowing trade to resume.

The commandos patrolled on foot, moving from village to village, securing each one as they passed, protecting the engineers' ‘clearance and destroyer teams’.

As well as clearing the road, the operation allowed the men of Juliet Company to hold shuras with village elders, learning about insurgent activity.

As *Navy News* went to press, one of the most tangible signs of the progress made by Allied forces came with the formal transfer of responsibility for security to Afghan forces.

ANA soldiers paraded in a ceremony in Lashkar Gah, where British troops have been operating since 2006.

It is the fourth of seven districts where security is now the responsibility of ANA and Afghan Police units, with no coalition troops involved in routine patrols.

Work in other areas will continue to ensure the UK remains on track to withdraw combat forces by the end of 2014.



Picture: SSgt Jeremy Ross



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Hillhouse



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Hillhouse



Picture: SSgt Jeremy Ross



Not a quiet day for King Alfred

AFTER parading through the heart of Portsmouth for the first time, sailors from the city's own naval reserve unit marched into Guildhall Square where the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Dame Mary Fagan, took the salute.

The Whale Island RNR unit – counterpart to the Territorial Army – has enjoyed the Freedom of the City for nearly eight years, but never had the chance to exercise that supreme civic honour until now.

So on one Saturday morning in July Portsmouth's principal shopping street, Commercial Road, ground to a halt as King Alfred personnel followed the beating drums and stirring martial tunes of the Band of HM Royal Marines as they marched through the city centre.

Events reached a climax in front of the Civic Offices where Lord Mayor Cllr Cheryl Buggy inspected the Guard of Honour and thanked the part-time sailors for their service to their nation.

"No-one makes you join the reserves – it's something you volunteer to do on top of your day job and credit should be given for that," Cllr Buggy told the assembled reservists in front of the Guildhall.

"I know you are quietly carrying out your duties in service around the world, but today we are not going to be quiet.

"Today we will celebrate your achievements and let everybody know and spread the word about the outstanding work carried out by naval reservists at sea – and in operational theatres alongside your regular Royal Navy and Royal Marines colleagues."

One in ten of the 200 or so personnel from King Alfred are currently on active duties in both

Afghanistan and Gulf among the Royal Navy's other global commitments.

Personnel from the unit also augment numerous joint or maritime battle staff operations and exercises around the world, while medics from Portsmouth's main hospital, Queen Alexandra, are saving lives right now at Camp Bastion.

Two King Alfreds who recently returned from Afghanistan – Cdr Bruce Ross and Lt Christiaan Hesse – received medals to acknowledge their service in that troubled land.

For Cdr Ross it was his second tour of duty in Afghanistan, this time in Kabul supporting the training of the Afghan National Army.

During his six months in the Afghan capital he saw 26,000 troops – roughly quarter the size of the British Army – pass through basic training.

"I have never worked so hard in my life but supporting something like that is ultimately incredibly rewarding," he said.

Equally rewarding for Cdr Kevin Robertson, King Alfred's Commanding Officer, was the support Portsmouthians showed as his men and women marched through the city's heart.

"As CO of HMS King Alfred – and as a proud native of the city – to exercise the right to march through Portsmouth is a rare honour and a real privilege.

"Being a naval city, the bulk of our people come from around this city. We're proud and delighted to have been part of this historic occasion."

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Weatherston, FRPU East



For whom t

THE slightly hollow peal, reverberating around the Hamoaze, signalled the end not merely of a ship but an age.

The era of the Type 22 has passed.

First Chatham, then Campbeltown, finally Cumberland and Cornwall. Now they belong to the ages.

The last chapter in the Type 22 story was completed over seven days at the end of June 2011.

The book was opened with HMS Broadsword back in the mid-70s. In the intervening 35 years, 14 ships, many bearing the greatest names in the annals of the Royal Navy – Sheffield, Coventry, Brilliant, London – were built and served under the White Ensign.

The Broadwords reached their apogee with the final batch of four to be built, ships which incorporated the lessons of the Falklands conflict, not least the provision of a main gun to pummel the enemy ashore.

The result was, arguably, the finest frigates ever to raise the White Ensign, invariably beloved by the men and women who served in them, and appreciated by senior officers for the punch they could deliver.

They could not, however, withstand the axe of austerity. Last autumn's defence review deemed all four remaining 22s should go.

The last of the old breed did not go gently into that good night, however.

Just weeks ago, HMS Cumberland was ferrying civilians to safety from Benghazi, the crack of gunfire echoing around the port as Libya descended into civil war. Just weeks ago, HMS

Cornwall was prowling the Indian Ocean, looking for – and finding – pirates, freeing hostages and keeping the sea lanes open.

Cornwall's ship's company had hoped for a stay of execution given world events. It was not to be.

And so on the final day of June, the curtain was lowered on the Fighting 99's 23-year career.

It was an occasion charged with emotion, not least the two symbolic acts which signalled the ship was simply Cornwall, no longer prefixed by HMS: the lowering of the White Ensign and the tolling of the ship's bell.

It fell to CPO John Midwood to haul down the Royal Navy's standard for the last time.

"It was a poignant moment – and an honour for me," said the senior rate, who stepped in to perform the task when a shipmate fell ill.

"It all went well, so I'm very relieved because I was very nervous at such an important time.

"This is the last of the Type 22s, but things must move on. It's a shame such a good ship's company will be broken up."

His shipmate LS Malcolm Ratcliffe added: "I am very proud to have the rare distinction of having served in them all – I started on HMS Campbeltown and ended on Cornwall."

LS Ratcliffe, and his shipmates who numbered nearly 300, had been an outstanding body of men and women in the word's of the ship's last Commanding Officer, Cdr David Wilkinson.

"My ship's company have been fantastic – a wonderful example of the youth of today. I look back on my command with pride," he said of his 13 months in charge of the frigate.

The last act in Cornwall's



● Three members of HMS Cumberland's Ensign after it was lowered for the last time

life was presided over by the Chaplain of the Fleet, the Rev Scott Brown, and attended by loved ones, plus guest of honour Lady Mary Holborow, Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall. She told guests that the ship's passing was "a very sad day for the county of Cornwall."

Other distinguished guests included former commanding officers of Cornwall, Royal Naval Association members from across the county, councillors from Cornwall County Council and the County President of the Royal British Legion.

"We aimed to say goodbye to HMS Cornwall and our links with the county of Cornwall with dignity and I think we did that successfully," said Cdr Wilkinson.

"I hope the people of Cornwall

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he bells toll



s ship's company fold the frigate's White Ensign

have good memories of HMS Cornwall and all who served on her."

His ship's company hasn't been entirely broken up yet.

There was a final freedom parade through the streets of Cornwall's county town, Truro.

The sailors took their curtain call to cheers and applause as the public lined the pavements.

The hour-long march ended in Prince's Street, right in front of the city hall, where Cdre Jamie Miller, the Navy's regional commander, took the salute and Lady Holborow inspected the Guard of Honour and thanked the sailors for their turn-out – and their service for their nation.

The parade was followed by a service of thanksgiving in the cathedral just a matter of yards away. It was a 'full house' with

the pews filled for the historic occasion.

"The support that my predecessors and I have received from the County of Cornwall has been huge and has been a consistent source of comfort throughout all the ship has done. It is an honour to have been there today," said Cdr Wilkinson.

Most of the sailors will remain with F99 until late October – a year after her demise was announced – as they carry out the difficult task of 'de-storing ship', namely removing sensitive equipment or kit which might be useful elsewhere in the Fleet.

Rewind a fortnight and, save for the 'actors', the 'drama' was identical: the same emotions, the same sad ceremony, the same words of pride and sorrow.

The ship's bell resounded three times, the White Ensign was lowered, the solemn tones of the Band of HM Royal Marines were carried along the jetty by the spring breeze and HMS Cumberland passed into history.

Around 100 guests, families and friends of the Fighting Sausage, and crew members past and present were invited to hear Capt Steve Dainton give an emotional valedictory.

"This is a momentous day in the life of HMS Cumberland," the frigate's final commanding officer declared.

"It is one of mixed emotions with poignancy and celebration about the long gone and more recent past combined with optimism for the future.

"It is very sad to see a ship leave active service earlier than we expected and to see the final lowering of the Royal Navy ensign.

"But it is a privilege to share this event with the friends and families of HMS Cumberland."

Capt Dainton told his sailors

they were the finest crew he had had the privilege to command – and that he would never forget the relieved and grateful expressions of families evacuated from Libya (see above right).

That final deployment, in harm's way, meant that Cumberland returned home to Devonport much later than originally planned when she sailed east of Suez last year.

So Capt Dainton took the opportunity again to thank the families of his men and women for their enduring support and understanding.

"HMS Cumberland has always been remembered as a friendly ship and this made her a 'family ship'. So it is very fitting to have so many of our families here and friends from her past and present to mark such a significant occasion and say farewell to their ship.

"The families of the ship's company have been very supportive over the years and I think it is harder for them to cope with us going away than us. I therefore, thank them with all my heart."

After the ceremony alongside the Type 22 frigate, the ship's decommissioning cake, made by HMS Raleigh catering school, was ceremonially cut by the sailor who has served for the longest on board AB Hayley Kirby (nine years on Cumberland), while a glass of bubbly was raised as a toast to the ship and crews.

Like her three sisters, Cumberland too is being prepared for disposal, her innards emptied by the dwindling ship's company.

The fate of all four Type 22s has yet to be determined.

As for their place in history, that's long since been assured.

Cumberland's 'quality, resilience and stamina'

AS THE Fighting Sausage took her final bow, her Commanding Officer Capt Steve Dainton took the opportunity once again to highlight this ship's role in the Libyan crisis.

He told *Navy News* Cumberland's speed of response to events in North Africa again proved the value of the Navy's readiness to be effective anywhere in the world at short notice.

The frigate was in the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean, carrying out escort and counter-piracy patrols, when in February she handed over her duties and headed north through the Suez Canal for home and her paying-off.

But even as she disembarked her final Suez Canal pilot, Cumberland received word that the situation in Libya was deteriorating. She was immediately diverted to Soudha Bay in Crete to embark additional supplies, fuel, a Foreign and Commonwealth Office team and a contingent of Royal Marines to support the NATO operation Unified Protector.

Capt Dainton, who was in command of the frigate at the time, described what happened next.

He said: "Almost immediately Cumberland was ordered to proceed into Benghazi as it was apparent that a number of UK nationals and entitled personnel required evacuation and on February 24 she became the first RN warship for many years to dock in Libya.

"The primary concern for my team initially rested with gaining an understanding of the local tactical situation and potential threats.

"The previous few days had seen several reports of attacks on the civilian population in Benghazi, including unconfirmed reports of Libyan fast jets being used for crowd control as well as intelligence suggesting helicopter gunships over the town and the potential arrival off the port of Benghazi of two Libyan Combattante fast patrol boats.

"In addition, a more pressing consideration was dealing with the local conditions within the port itself.

"It was apparent that the entrance and berths were still viable but it was not clear how Cumberland would be received by any Libyan forces in the port, or indeed even if there was a berth clear for us to proceed alongside.

"Added to that, we were operating in challenging weather conditions including a pretty steady 35 knot wind which certainly focused my mind!

"As it was, the ship's company closed up at Action Stations and with a pretty comprehensive array of small arms on the upper deck, we conducted a difficult alongside.

"On that occasion we evacuated 207 people and in two subsequent trips into Benghazi we took out a total of 454.

"Whilst at one end we were embarking tired,

hungry and often frightened civilians, at the other end we were maintaining a local air and maritime picture and were ready to respond to threats if required.

"At this point, it is also worth noting the impressive performance of the embarked Royal Marine force who generated a firm but relatively benign cordon ashore whilst retaining a well-armed Quick Response Force in the hangar throughout the day.

"As such, we were able to gain a considerable amount of goodwill from the local population as they did not feel overly threatened."

He added: "Perhaps for me, the most impressive aspect of the evacuation was that it reinforced my belief about the quality, resilience and stamina of Cumberland's sailors and marines who showed incredible flexibility in swinging from force protection duties one minute to caring for the evacuees the next.

"In the ensuing days, Cumberland conducted security patrols in the Gulf of Sirte and off Misrata, assisting in the building of a maritime picture, providing indications and warnings of aircraft taking off from Libyan airfields and remaining at high readiness to conduct security boardings of vessels suspected of breaking the embargo."

Capt Dainton said: "It would be wrong of me to suggest that Cumberland was the only ship doing these types of patrols and during our short time there we worked in close proximity with NATO warships from France, the US, Italy, Canada, the Netherlands and Germany.

"I have no doubt that much of this sharing of information comes from the familiarity bred from the decades of training and operating together with a common set of procedures.

"Although there were undoubted information exchange difficulties, the efforts expended in the run-up to the formal chop to Operation Unified Protector meant that the transition into the NATO task group was relatively painless for Cumberland."

He added: "To me all this proves the mobility of maritime units to react to emergent crises; the flexibility to swing quickly between tasks; the ability to sustain forces for long periods without the need for consent in international waters; the benefit that comes from working with warships and aircraft from other nations.

"It is a clear indication of the advantage gained from having a globally-deployed, professional Navy manned by highly skilled and quality sailors and marines."



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Black Duke gets back to nature

CAN you see an island paradise yet?

LET(ME) ‘Smithy’ Smith and AB ‘Fletch’ Fletcher peer expectantly out of the netting on HMS Monmouth’s quarterdeck as the Black Duke powers through the Indian Ocean at 28kts (32mph) – which is near as damn it top speed for a Type 23 frigate.

“It really is an awesome sight when we power though the water,” says Fletcher.

Indeed, but things have slowed down a tad now as the Devonport-based warship has been enjoying a few days in the Seychelles, taking a break from a sustained period of counter-piracy operations off Somalia.

As well as being a popular honeymoon destination and a regular stop for RN warships patrolling in the Indian Ocean, the Seychelles are also important in the fight against piracy – visiting Coalition vessels work with the islands’ security forces in the struggle against the scourge of buccaneers.

On this occasion, the Black Dukes put piracy to the back of their minds as this was more of a ceremonial/fun visit to the Seychelles.

Monmouth’s arrival in the capital Victoria coincided with National Day celebrations, for which the ship provided a 24-strong Guard of Honour who marched through the streets alongside members of the islands’ Defence Force. For good measure the ship’s 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx, callsign Black Knight, took part in a flypast.

In addition to their involvement in the Seychelles’ independence celebrations, 30 members of the ship’s company helped an unusual conservation project.

A dozen sailors who are qualified divers headed to Cap Ternay, located in the Seychelles’ protected marine park, to help the Marine Conservation Society of Seychelles monitor the islands’ turtle and shark populations.

The divers were asked to retrieve a number of acoustic receivers from the water which recorded the movements of tagged turtles and sharks. Once the information from the receivers has been downloaded, wildlife experts will have a better understanding about the local sealife population.

Meanwhile on land... Another group from the frigate were hard at work at Nature Seychelles, a reserve for the islands’ exotic flora and fauna.

The sailors got stuck in to clear the drainage network and rooted out some insidious weeds which threatened plant life.

“During our visit, my ship’s company got to experience many different aspects of Seychelles life,” said Monmouth’s Commanding Officer Cdr Dean Bassett.

“In particular, we were very honoured to be invited to support the citizens with their national day. It was a remarkable opportunity for us to understand more about local culture.

“We also made our own small contribution to conserving the Seychelles’ beautiful natural environment.”

His ship is now back on patrol on the large-scale maritime security mission in the Indian Ocean and Gulf region.

Picture: LA(Phot) Stu Hill, FRPU North



Return of York – ‘the very best ambassador’

ONE war, one icy paradise, one windswept archipelago, three oceans, one wet and blustery homecoming – all in five months’ work for HMS York which concluded her latest deployment in style.

The veteran warship – Britain’s fastest destroyer – returned to Portsmouth with a 15-gun salute, Lynx flypast, jets of water from escorting tugs... and some very un-July-like weather.

Thankfully, the reception from loved ones on Round Tower and in Portsmouth Naval Base, where they were entertained by the Band of HM Royal Marines as they waited in the rain for D98 to arrive, was rather warmer.

The Type 42 destroyer – one of three of this stalwart class of ships still in service – left home in February bound for the Falklands... and was almost immediately diverted to the Mediterranean to help lift civilians from Libya as the North African country descended into anarchy and civil war.

York delivered 1½ tonnes of medical supplies – a gift from the Swedish Government – to the rebel-held city of Benghazi.

And, as Royal Marines from the Fleet Protection Group provided a protective cordon around the destroyer in the port, lorries carried the aid away and 43 refugees filed aboard seeking salvation, among them women with young children and oil workers who had struggled through 250 miles of Western Desert to reach the coast.

After safely delivering the civilians to Malta, the ship resumed her original mission and made for the South Atlantic. She spent eight weeks patrolling the Falklands, flying the flag and reassuring locals, breaking off for a 12-day visit to South Georgia assisting the British Antarctic Survey and allowing the ship’s company to enjoy one of the world’s most treasured wildlife havens.

Once the destroyer had negotiated the Patagonian Canals, she entered the Pacific, visited Peru, passed through the Panama Canal, weighed in briefly in the campaign against drug trafficking in the Caribbean, stopped off in Key West, Bermuda and the Azores, and finally made for home with an extra 26,858 miles on the odometer.

All in all, a deployment none of the 250 or so men and women aboard are likely to forget in a hurry.

“We’re delighted to be home, back to our families and friends who have been nothing short of brilliant in their unstinting love and support for us whilst away, of course, but it’s been a really terrific deployment,” said Cdr Simon Staley, York’s Commanding Officer.

“There’s never been a quiet or dull moment. We’ve delivered a really impressive tally of positive effects across a huge swathe of the world.

“I’ve asked much of my ship’s company and they have risen to the challenge, without fail – not just through the excellent, but hugely-testing, training we received before deploying, but also in keeping this fine old lady, now 27 years in commission, sustained and in peak performance, ready for any task at any time.

“They have proven to be the most professional and very best ambassadors for the Royal Navy and this country that I have ever served with.”

Bigwigs and big bangs

FRESH from her appearance in one capital, HMS Portland made for another as she spent five days in the shadow of Tower Bridge.

Having taken part in Armed Forces Day events in Edinburgh (*see page 33*), the frigate sailed up the Thames.

The focus of the Type 23’s visit was the annual graduation ceremony of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme.

After a reception across the river at HMS President, guests were brought to the frigate for demonstrations and tours.

A mix of Lords, MPs and Service personnel were treated to a number of demonstrations including a simulated air defence exercise in the ops room, a tour of the 30-man mess to see how sailors live and an introduction to the ship’s weapons next to the 4.5in gun.

Admiral Phil Jones, Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff, hosted breakfast in the captain’s cabin for guests including a number of Permanent Under Secretaries and the military assistant to the Prime Minister.

Those guests had not long left when the next group arrived, among them representatives of the CBI and the London School of Economics.

Rounding off the day in style, Portland staged a dinner in the wardroom for First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, who was hosting Vice Admirals Tian, Commander of the Northern Sea Fleet in China and de Giorgio of the Italian Navy.

It was an unforgettable evening, not just for the guests at the dinner, but for the chefs who cooked for them.

To keep up with such a large number of events, Portland enlisted the help of a class of culinary students from HMS Raleigh who helped the ship’s own galley team cook up a storm. All were thanked personally by Admiral Stanhope.

It’s been a frantic few weeks for Portland. She represented the RN at Dutch Navy Days in Den Helder, and has also been to Gibraltar to give prospective warfare officers gunnery practice, which included a night shoot.

So with the ship’s own Principal Warfare Officers (known as PWOs) and Commanding Officer Cdr Mike Knott closed up in the operations room, the immortal words: “Four-five engage” were uttered and the smell of cordite drifted across the upper deck.

This was an illumination shoot – firing an initial few rounds to light up the night sky before aiming high explosive shells into the sea lit up by the flares.

Eight rounds left the barrel of Portland’s 4.5in on this shoot, watched “in awe”, said logistics officer Lt Cdr Kara Chadwick, by the PWO students plus members of the ship’s company. “It was a bit like Guy Fawkes Night – but with a lot more bang!”

Meet the FRUKUS

HMS Dauntless’ sea boat rides the fairly choppy surf somewhere off the Eastern Seaboard of the United States as a two-week international exercise comes to a close.

Britain’s most advanced destroyer was the RN’s input to FRUKUS (pronounced froo-kus apparently, not fruck-us), an annual get-together of naval forces from France, Russia, the UK and USA.

The four nations take it in turns to host the fortnight’s get-together – this year that fell to the Americans.

In addition to Dauntless, the ingredients for FRUKUS were Russia’s Admiral Chabanenko, France’s FS Ventose, the command team from the USS Harry S Truman carrier battle group and the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS James E Williams.

Before the ‘main course’ – a week at sea with a number of exercises and serials to complete together – there was the matter of the ‘starter’: a few days alongside in the world’s largest naval base where the different nationalities could get to know each other, and their ways of working.

Twenty sailors from Dauntless and the Chabanenko were dispatched to the improbably-titled USS Buttercup, part of the Farrier Firefighting School at Norfolk.

Despite the title, Farrier is more than just about fighting fires; it’s a more general damage control school, featuring an American counterpart to the Royal Navy’s flood trainer, the DRUI.

“Damage control is universal,” explained Master Chief Damage Controlman

Terry Wylie who put the Dauntless and Chabanenko sailors through their paces.

“The biggest thing we learned was that you can get past any language barrier when dealing with damage control. Even though we may approach things differently, we do things similarly.”

While the damage control party found the Yankee DRUI drill handy (sorry), Dauntless’ bridge team could be found on the Bridge Resource Management – a navigation/bridge simulator.

Sailors from all four nations spent six hours at a time on the replica ship honing ship-handling skills.

“We got to know the other navies both personally and professionally,” said Dauntless’ S/Lt James Callender. “We also got a better understanding of each other, which helps diplomacy and working together in the future.”

“With this training, we can become a better team.”

And so to sea where it was time to put that ‘interoperability’ (as the Americans call it) – ie whether the equipment and people on the respective ships can co-operate seamlessly from the basics of communications and manoeuvring the ships, to multi-national missions such as counter-piracy, boarding operations, even a spot of gunnery.

And evidently it all went rather well, for the man directing FRUKUS, Rear Admiral Herman Shelanski USN, was delighted with the outcome of the fortnight of exercises and training serials.

“We hope that this is just the beginning of increasing our ability to benefit security around the world and to lead us, as four

different nations, into future operations, both afloat and ashore,” he said.

With FRUKUS completed, Dauntless – the second of the Navy’s six Type 45 destroyers – remained on the other side of the Atlantic.

The ship spent the July 4 weekend in Mayport in northern Florida, where local US navy commanders hailed the ship as “the latest and greatest of the Royal Navy”.

It was in the high 20s (Celsius, not Fahrenheit...) in Florida, so Mayport naval base staff had suncream and lip balm ready to distribute to the 200 or so sailors, who were keen to hit the local beaches during their stay.

The Floridian heat was just what the doctor (well Fleet HQ) ordered as hot weather trials were required to test the ability of a Type 45 to operate in extremes of temperature (Dauntless has already conducted some cold weather trials off northern Norway earlier this year).

Another key part of Dauntless’ USA workout is to push the boundaries of flight deck operations.

The 45s have a landing pad large enough to accommodate an RAF Chinook – but more typically they’ll deploy either with a Mk8 Lynx (and, in a handful of years, its successor the Wildcat) or Merlin.

815 Naval Air Squadron – and Dauntless – leapt at the chance to take their Lynx, aircrew and maintainers/technicians aboard





KEY FOB OPENS DOORS

IT'S the age-old story.

Boy meets girl. And boy. And boy. And girl. And boy. (Repeat about ten times.)

They go for a drive through the lush Hampshire countryside in a 4x4, down a tree-lined lane, on a fine summer's morning.

And wouldn't you know it, BANG!

There's a bomb in the road and men in garish garb and baseball caps shooting at you.

Crack-crack-crack. Rat-a-tat-tat. Rat-a-tat-tat.

INCOMING.

Everybody out.

Move it.

Everybody out.

Half a dozen Land Rovers grind to a halt, their hazard lights flashing, horns blaring. A hastily-tossed smoke grenade explodes and spews forth.

A good dozen sailors spill out of them, look around quickly then spy a ditch running parallel to the road and leap into it.

Salvation lies a good few hundred yards away. The vehicles aren't especially important. Getting the patrol home safely is.

The sailors jump into the ditch, using it as a trench, barrelling along it, some returning fire while their comrades run past them. Through a drain – slightly unsavoury, but it's safe – then further along the ditch (which acts more like a WW1 trench) until the rifle fire ends... and the ditch ends too.

It's now just a hundred or so yards to the new £1/2m training complex, built specifically to prepare sailors for the rigours of life on the ground in Afghanistan.

Today is only the second day the complex – a mock-up of a forward operating base, or FOB, as found in Helmand – has been in use.

Upwards of 1,200 sailors from all professions – divers, aircrew, engineers, musicians – will go through two days of intensive training in this replica base at Longmoor Camp, near Petersfield, each year.

Although the burden of the British mission in Helmand is currently being borne by 3 Commando Brigade, the Royal Marines are heavily supported by personnel from across the Naval Service – right now there are about 700 'augmentees' in theatre.

All sailors deploying to Helmand are expected to be able to handle themselves in combat should they come face-to-face with insurgents on a patrol, or should their base come under attack.

They go through two weeks of pre-deployment training at HMS Nelson (the theory) and at Longmoor, half an hour's drive away, (the practice), which reaches its climax with two days living, eating, sleeping, patrolling around and defending a mock FOB.

There's been a replica base here for a few years, but the weather has taken its toll on the giant sandbag construction. It's been

replaced by a more permanent structure half a mile away, which will train matelots till the mission in Afghanistan ends.

The compound is around 500 feet square, guarded by four watch towers (or sangers) and a gatehouse. Living conditions are rudimentary (nine containers with bunk beds, a portable building which serves as an operations room, chemical loos, no showers – the ablutions block is still being built).

To be sure it's a rather surreal environment. Through the trees you can make out a replica Eastern European town, a relic of training for wars past. There's an old tank parked a stone's throw from the main gate. You're surrounded by trees in full leaf. There's the distant, constant drone of traffic on the A3 – it's no more than half a mile away.

But otherwise, the emphasis at the new FOB – which will receive a formal name when there's a fresh act of bravery by a sailor or Royal Marine – is the realism offered by the experience: crashes, bangs and cracks from insurgent weapons, people speaking Pashtu, irate villagers, casualties (played by amputees) with horrific-looking injuries, plus the fact that the base itself is similar to those in theatre (except the sandbagged walls have been replaced here by concrete which withstand the British weather rather better).

Capt Kev Cripps RM, one of the green berets imparting his knowledge of Afghanistan to the 50-plus sailors, musicians and aircrew being trained at the new FOB, explains:

"You cannot have people 'imagining' they're in a FOB. If sailors 'buy into this', then it's the best way to get training value out of the experience. Some learn very quickly and in two weeks we can almost take them from zeroes to heroes."

"We let the trainees make the decisions. If they make bad ones, we let the scenario run – people learn from their mistakes."

"It's short, it's sharp and it's a totally different mindset to being on a ship."

And not just on a ship. Fifteen of the trainees today are musicians from the RM Band Portsmouth heading to Helmand not as stretcher bearers, but as, er, musicians.

They're performing at the various bases and outpost "to raise morale and take minds off what's going off". Despite doing the day job rather than war fighting, they've still got to go through pre-deployment training.

"This training is essential," says cornet player and violinist C/Sgt 'Rasher' Bacon. "It gets you in the right frame of mind."

"I've been to quite a few jobs in Afghanistan. The set-up here is pretty good – there's quite a lot

of realism."

The aim of the fortnight in the hands of the small pre-deployment training team is simple: to make sure a matelot is an asset in theatre, not a liability.

"We don't expect sailors to do strike operations and kick in doors – we cannot train them to be a Royal Marine in two weeks. But they will be able to go outside the security of the FOB, on a foot patrol, in a vehicle, in a helicopter," says Lt Cdr Willie Routledge, in charge of pre-deployment training; he's done two tours of duty in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

"A lot of the skills we teach are just as important in everyday life – they're not just skills for the battlefield. Casualty drills are the same as dealing with a road accident – if there was a car crash, I'd expect a Serviceman or woman to be able to deal with it."

And other drills are purely military. Such as 'breaking contact' – getting safely away from the enemy, as in the convoy ambush above.

The first rule is to 'get some smoke down'. That's banged in by the Royal Marines instructors time and again. "If they can't see you, they can't shoot at you..." Bread and butter to a commando, but hardly natural for a medical assistant or diver.

A few things strike you about watching the sailors go through the FOB of war (sorry).

One, yet again, is that we put tremendous burden on young men and women in almost impossible scenarios.

An Afghan woman collapses in front of the base's main gate. Her husband rushes up, pleads for medical help.

Are they genuine? Are they insurgents? At the very least you need your interpreter to hand to find out what's going on. You need to ask the right questions – and in simple terms so that they can get through the language barrier. And, all the time, you need to be wary that the 'sick' woman is not a suicide bomber.

It all takes too long. The local bleeds to death in front of the base. Villagers show their disapproval when a little later a truck drives past the FOB entrance and lobs a grenade towards the gate.

In the watchtower overlooking the main gate, a sailor stands guard with an SA80 rifle at the ready. The inside of the tower is plastered with information, reminders of what to do when locals approach: note their clothes, age, posture, height, hair colour, describe their vehicle if appropriate – all details you'd expect a police officer rather than a matelot to note.

The men and women in the four towers looking out over the forward base and environs, spend one hour at a time on duty; the four or five hours not spent in the turret is spent sleeping, eating, in the ops room, on patrol, or as part of the 'quick response force' – a small



detachment expected to react to a situation inside or outside the compound at immediate notice (not a new concept – just watch Zulu...).

On a glorious July morning, AET David Bartlam – about to maintain Sea Kings of 857 Naval Air Squadron at Camp Bastion – is standing guard in Sanger 2 (tower 2) right next to the main gate.

"Sanger 2?"

"Sanger 2, roger," the engineer responds on his personal role radio.

"Alright for water?"

"Alright for water."

"Alright for ammo?"

"Alright for ammo."

It's been a pretty quiet hour, but after a fitful night's sleep, the 24-year-old from Cornwall is quite glad about that. The compound was alerted at 4am. There have been patrols almost every hour since. There's a near constant soundtrack of cracks, whips, bangs, sometimes near, sometimes far.

"The experience has been brilliant – really, really professional, physically demanding, mentally demanding, but at the end of the day it can save your life," says David. "It really is a perfect environment for training."

A Land Rover drives up to the approaches of the camp and a woman climbs out. The young airman observes her movements.

"You look for bulges in their clothing, you look for suspicious movements, you look for them being on the phone," he says. "When they approach, you get them to raise their arms, turn around, frisk themselves."

All of which the air engineer has learned during the past ten days, plus one word of Afghan: *dresh* – stop.

There's no need for this woman approaching the gate to drezh... she's bringing the bag meals for the hungry sailors...

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dave Gallagher, FRPU East



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Boards get place of honour

IT IS a roll of honour unlike almost any other – the A to Z of the Navy's sacrifice in two world wars, from Abdiel to Zulu.

Pictured above is one of two huge memorial boards listing every ship and submarine crewed by Devonport sailors which was lost in the 20th Century's two cataclysmic global conflicts – boards which have been moved and rededicated in their original home.

The impressive wooden boards with gilt inscriptions, measuring around 30 feet long and ten feet high, were originally housed in HMS Drake's drill shed and then moved to the South Yard heritage and museum area when the drill shed was converted into the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess.

With the conversion complete and parts of South Yard now being occupied by Princess Yachts, there's been a review of the heritage site and a move of much of the heritage collection by the Royal Navy, assisted by expertise from the National Museums of the Royal Navy, Plymouth City Museums and other specialists.

So the two boards of honour now take pride of place in the Starling Suite of the Senior Rates Mess, where they were blessed in a religious service in HMS Drake by chaplain Stan Kennon.

The move makes the boards much easier for various groups, such as ship and Royal Naval associations, to pay their respects following remembrance services in the Naval Base church as well as being appreciated by hundreds of Devonport-based sailors every day.

The 1914-18 board features great names such as HMS Indefatigable, lost at Jutland, HMS Ocean

which fell victim to a mine in the Dardanelles, and HM Ships Majestic and Nottingham, sunk by submarines.

The 1939-45 board is even more imposing, featuring both legendary warships – the torpedoed battleship Barham, carriers Courageous, Glorious and Eagle, Fiji and Gloucester lost in the bloody Cretan campaign, and also ill-starred merchant ships the Laconia and City of Benares, which both had Royal Navy personnel on board when they were sunk by U-boat.

Also included in the relocated collection are decorative figureheads Basilisk and Sphinx, which flank the entrance to the Senior Rates Mess, the figurehead Cadmus and a six-feet high replica of the Golden Hind in the dining room, two mid-19th Century cannon and two quick-firing guns which stand guard outside the building.

"It is really nice to see a lot of the memorabilia coming back into the mess," said WO Andy Lawson, mess president.

"It's helped us create a strong maritime atmosphere and the comments from the mess members and the many visitors say how good it feels to have some of our heritage back around us."

Work continues to record the historic artefacts properly in the varied collection and a new display has been created by the Naval Base heritage volunteers in the old fire station in South Yard with ships' badges and the following figure-heads: the bearded Tamar, original King Billy, Duke of Wellington, Aurora and Queen Victoria.



A FORCE FOR GOOD



Pre-eminent Proms

THE South Coast Proms, at HMS Excellent on Whale Island, took place in early July with 6,000 people attending.

The world-famous Massed Bands of the Royal Marines took centre stage (pictured above by LA(Phot) Jay Allen), performing

Mark notches up the miles

A SUBMARINER has set himself a gargantuan challenge in the name of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) – to run 2,000 miles by the end of the year.

WO1 Mark Duffy from Clyde Naval Base in Helensburgh started the challenge with the passing of 2010, and had already reached the 650-mile mark by the end of May.

Those of a mathematical disposition (or with a calculator to hand) might note that, in order to be successful, Mark must run 5.48 miles a day, every day, for a year.

Hence, to make the challenge more practical, Mark has taken on three marathons and nine half marathons, including the Chester Marathon, the Great North Run and the Gosport half-marathon.

The 44-year-old is currently working for Flag Officer Sea Training, and is making the most of his time above the Oggins by squeezing in as many marathons as possible.

His most recent success, the Edinburgh marathon, took him just four hours and 23 minutes to complete.

"It was 23 minutes slower than I hoped, but I am glad I finished" commented Mark.

To sponsor Mark or read more about his progress, see <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Marc.Duffy2>

a sparkling selection of classical, contemporary, military and mainstream music in glorious surroundings under the summer sky, culminating in a firework display, with Sally Taylor, a well-known local TV presenter, hosting the event.

This relaxed and fun picnic-in-the-park music event proved, once again, to be the South Coast's premier music event.

Lt Col Eddie Parks said: "The South Coast Proms is now in its second year, and we are proud to be delivering an event which raises much-needed funds for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity."

A warm-up band entertained the crowds prior to the main show and an enormous cheer went up as the Royal Marines Bands took to the stage.

As the sun began to set, the lights went up on the stage and the large television screens enabled the audience to see the performers' skills close up.

Land of Hope and Glory and

Jerusalem got the crowds on their feet, singing along and waving their flags, whilst during a moving performance of *Sunset*, the large screens showed footage of the Royal Marines serving in Afghanistan.

Even as the audience were leaving the arena, a band played popular music to keep the queues entertained and in the party mood.

Kate MacDougall, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Events Manager, said: "These were two truly spectacular nights."

"You really can't beat the Royal Marines Band Service and I think, by the smiles on the faces of the audience as they left the arena, they would agree totally with me!"

One gentleman was heard to say "Tonight has made me proud to be British."

To sign up to payroll giving if you are serving, or to make a donation to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity if you are not, log on to rnmrc.org.uk.

Boxing boon for RNRMC

PHYSICAL training instructors from Clyde Naval Base handed over £2,500 of charity cash recently – money raised during the site's HMS Neptune Boxing Dinner Show earlier this year.

On hand to receive the cheque was Robert Robson, Chief Executive of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

POPT Mickey Preston, who helped arrange the boxing night, said: "The money came from not only the ticket sales on the night, but from the raffle and charity auction."

"We had 180 people turn up for the event, and also had the WBO Super Featherweight Champion of the World, Rickey Burns, throwing his weight behind the charity effort. The drive really worked and we raised around £5,400."

"We picked two charities to be given the cash – Help for Heroes and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. They are both fantastic causes and we are delighted we could help them out."

The RNRMC will use their portion of the money to help serving and former members of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines. The charity supports the entire Naval family, giving financial help to those in need and suffering hardship.

HMS Neptune's Boxing Dinner Show was a great success with some of the best boxers in the Royal Navy and RAF clashing on the night as well as amateur fighters from local boxing club, Hill Park.

The night ended in a draw, with both the Navy and RAF totting up three wins each.

Dave steels himself for Ironman triathlon

OBSERVER Lt Dave Anderson of the Culdrose-based 771 Search And Rescue (SAR) Naval Air Squadron hopes that all his hard training will stand him in good stead when he competes in the UK Ironman Triathlon on July 31 in Bolton, Lancashire.

As *Navy News* goes to press, Dave will be undertaking a 2.4km swim, 112 mile bike ride, and a 26.2 mile run, all of which must be completed within 17 hours if he is to qualify as an Ironman.

Despite having only given himself 15 weeks to prepare, Dave is quietly confident of achieving a sub-14 hour time, and has been training relentlessly with half-marathons in Bath and most recently Torbay for the Lizard Lifeboat appeal.

Dave, a former Royal Marine with over 20 years experience, is entering this competition to raise funds and, more importantly, awareness, of the work of the Royal Marines Charitable Trust (RMCT), as well as Rotary-nominated charities.

The RMCT provides help through the Recovery Pathway, a scheme designed to assist the recovery of some and the transition to civilian life of those Royal

Marines too injured to continue active service.

"The Royal Marines made me who I am today; their ethos and camaraderie is second to none and they are the most well-trained and professional fighting troops in the world with a reputation to match," said Dave.

"I feel I owe it to the Corps to try to raise as much sponsorship as I can for this fantastic charity."

The Squadron's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Chris 'Damage' Canning, said: "This is a fantastic effort by Dave, highlighting his Royal Marine roots but also training, commitment and determination, which are key tenets of the Royal Navy's ethos."

"I am absolutely sure that Dave will not only complete the event, becoming another 771 NAS Ironman, but that he will be an excellent ambassador representing the squadron, Culdrose and the Royal Navy at this high-profile event."

Anyone interested in supporting Dave can donate through his website: www.justgiving.com/Dave-Anderson771 or by sending a text donation via mobile saying "DAVE71" and the amount to 70070.



● Handsome young officer not included... Lt Ollie Clark, Flag Lieutenant to the First Sea Lord, and the new toy Type 45 destroyer he built

Picture: PO(Phot) Terry Seward, DMC Whitehall

The ship that bricks built

THOSE who bemoan that the Type 45 destroyer programme stopped at six lament no longer.

There are thousands of the futuristic-looking warships about to enter service.

This is the latest officially-sanctioned Royal Navy toy – a plastic-brick click-and-build Type 45 destroyer, plus five sailors in their No.1s, and one helicopter – joining an ever-expanding Fleet (that's a phrase we never thought would appear in these pages...).

The first model Type 45 was, appropriately, presented by the folk at toymakers Character Building to the offices of First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope... in incomplete form.

Lt Ollie Clark, the First Sea Lord's Flag Lieutenant, quickly set about the task and led a team of 'shipbuilders' piecing together D30 (in keeping with the class' nomenclature, HMS Dinky perhaps?).

Ninety minutes later one model was completed.

"We followed the instructions to the letter... and there was still one piece left over at the end," said Ollie. "I guess you never really know what each day is

going to throw at you."

In place of the Sea Viper missile silo there's a hold with opening doors to store vehicles/figures, the Kryten main gun rotates, and the helicopter can be 'parked' in the hangar.

Anyway, to celebrate the launch of the latest addition to the Fleet – and check the model for accuracy (an initial glance suggests the helicopter's most definitely not a Merlin or Lynx...) – three kits have been handed over to members of the T45 community, sans instructions, a few photographs and a challenge: build it in under two hours. We'll let you know how they get on.

As for readers eager to get their hands on the model, it's in the shops and on websites any day now, RRP £49.99.

There's already a number of small figures as part of the Character Building range, including a miniature matelot, Fleet Air Arm helicopter pilot and Royal Marines Commando, and a Royal Navy RIB/docks play set.

More details at www.hmarnedforcestoys.co.uk

Wrens seek suggestions for a title

THE WRNS Benevolent Trust celebrates its 70th birthday next year and is appealing to former Wrens to contribute to a book published to mark the anniversary.

To mark its 70 years, the Trust is publishing an illustrated history of its work and is requesting photographs covering the period 1942 to the present day, particularly of Wrens at work and play.

All profits from the book will go to the WRNS Benevolent Trust to enable it to continue helping former Wrens in need.

The book hasn't been given a title yet – so all suggestions for an eye-catching name will be welcomed.

Photos should be sent with an SAE for return, to Sarah Aytton, General Secretary, WRNS Benevolent Trust, Castaway House, 311, Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN.

The Trust held its Annual General Meeting at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth attended by its patron, the Princess Royal.

Princess Anne told the assembled members their work was more important than ever, particularly for the older generation, for whom quality of life was a real issue.

The Princess urged members to become ambassadors for the Trust, particularly in parts of the country where fewer former Wrens were living.

"Connections are easier to make in Portsmouth, people disappear into all corners of the country and we need to raise our profile to make sure they are aware of the help we can give," she said.

The Chairman of the Trust, Cdr Rosie Wilson, stood down, to be replaced by Cdr Andrea Crook, who in turn was replaced by Cdr Heather Rimmer as Vice Chairman.

Collingwood welcome

THE HMS Collingwood open day in June brought with it some very special visitors when a group of Chernobyl children were welcomed through the gates as part of their trip to the UK.

The visit was organised by Rob Baker, Vice Chair Portsmouth and Hayling Island Link, Chernobyl Children's Life Line.

The children said that their time at HMS Collingwood was their highlight.

Rob said "We know that they enjoyed their visit and really appreciated the kindness that they received."

During their time at the open day, they were met by the Commanding Officer, Cdre Tim Lowe, made good use of their time on the free fun fair, relished the helicopter displays and enjoyed the ice creams.

On departing, Rob said: "Our thanks go to all the guys who helped in arranging this visit."

Flying success for cyclist

A PETTY Officer based at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose cycled coast-to-coast from Watchet in Somerset to Westbay in Dorset to raise money for the Air Ambulance.

PO Dave Hack covered a total of 54 miles in four hours ten minutes to complete the event, coming in the top 30 out of 210 entrants.

Working with the Military Aviation Support Force (MASF), which provides technical and professional staff and support to naval aviation operations around the world, the Air Ambulance was a natural choice for Dave.

His efforts raised £210 for the charity.



● The Royal Marine rowers pass HMS Belfast heading towards Tower Bridge

Picture: PO(Phot) Terry Seward

Time on the Thames

INJURED Royal Marines have completed a gruelling 150-mile row up the Thames in aid of the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund.

Beginning their journey at Lechlade on Sunday July 10 and concluding at Greenwich on July 14, the route necessitated the negotiation of 45 locks and about 55,000 strokes from each participant to cover the distance – netting over £8,000 for the commando charity.

Their route took them past several notable locations affiliated with boating, including the 'Mecca' for British and global rowing, the Leander Club at Henley, and Hardwick House, reputedly the inspiration for the setting of *Wind in the Willows*.

The Royal Marines (and one Royal Naval able seaman) are all recovering from wounds, injury or illness – mostly sustained on operations in Afghanistan last year.

The Challenge is in keeping with the RN/RM Fortitude initiative, which is intended to offer enduring rehabilitation opportunities through sport and adventure training, while being an integral part of the recovery pathway by encouraging grit, determination and teamwork.

Challenge organiser, retired Royal Marine Brig Jeremy Robbins said: "They are a fairly extraordinary bunch of people who are well on their way to recovery, and it has been great to be involved once again with the Royal Marines. "Importantly, this builds upon the fantastic support we have in the broader community."

Perhaps even more remarkable, is that 11 of the 12 participants had no rowing experience prior to taking up the challenge. Thames Challenge originator, rowing coach and Taunton landscape architect Steve Swan, said: "Since May 6, I have coached the Royal

Marines, all but one of whom have never rowed before.

"Although not surprised by their ability to learn and sense of focus, I have been truly moved and humbled by their true grit to ignore pain and get the job done."

As well as encouraging recovery and raising money for charity, the event was intended to help with the re-integration of the injured personnel with their base units.

Mne Ben Wade, 22, who was injured in Afghanistan by an improvised explosive device, is one such example.

Sustaining injuries to his head, leg and face, he lost some vision in the process which barred him from further operational service.

"The rowing is helping me get my fitness back steadily. But the permanent damage to my vision means I can't be a fully operational Royal Marine as I can't shoot as well to the required standard.

"Therefore, I can't deploy or even go on exercises needing shooting skills. But this row is very rewarding for me mentally and physically and I am determined to play my full part with the lads."

Mne Will Brocklebank, of 40 Commando, injured his foot and heel in a road accident and had six operations to correct the damage.

Despite his ongoing treatment, he quickly volunteered for the challenge: "I have never rowed before and I volunteered because it is something new and different, and also because it provides therapy.

"Other side-effects have been the boost to my confidence and making me feel less isolated as an injured Marine who can't join in everything I joined the Corps for.

"Rowing is helping my fitness because I can't run, but I can row without pain, which

is fantastic."

The event was also intended to raise public awareness and support of the armed forces, and was helped greatly by a chance visit from a famous star.

On the Tuesday, *Dr Who* actor Matt Smith, who happened to be on location nearby, chatted with the crew as they paused between legs, before waving them on their way, providing a much-needed morale boost at the mid-point of the Challenge.

On arrival at London, the team was greeted by applause from members of staff from both Houses of Parliament, as well as a rapturous greeting from a large group of supporters on Westminster Bridge.

The route ended at the Old Royal Naval College at Greenwich, fittingly against the backdrop of the famous naval hospital created to support injured Naval Servicemen of generations past.

Olympic rowing gold medallist James Cracknell greeted the rowers as they crossed the finishing line.

Brig Jeremy Robbins remarked: "His approach to elite sporting excellence, challenge and rehabilitation after injury are inspirational, and match those that, in its own way, the Thames Challenge set out to achieve."

The team were presented to the Princess Royal at Buckingham Palace, before being hosted for dinner at the Union Jack Club by the Not Forgotten Association.

Brig Jeremy Robbins summed up: "The row is over now, but the fund-raising continues, as do the Marines' own challenges to recover as fully as they can and go forward to meet their potential."

Donations and further information can be found at www.thameschallenge.com.

Triumph for the ladies Ninety is the number

THE FOURTH Ladies Charity Night at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose proved a great success, with an extraordinary £6,027 raised for its chosen charities.

The night, which is quickly installing itself as a perennial favourite having already raised £21,000 in six years, featured a fashion show. Local ladies, including several breast cancer survivors, modelled a mixture of lingerie and evening dresses.

Other entertainment was provided by CPO Mick Eley with his 'Marching Soldiers' and the ever-popular 'Full Monty', which alone raised £480 through the

auctioning of five chairs actually positioned on the stage for the more curious at heart!

CPO 'Bill' Bailey expertly organised and ran the auction – 45 raffle prizes were donated from local supporters, with lots ranging from a tandem Paragliding trip to a sunset flight over Cornwall.

PO Sue Gibson organised the event, which raised funds for Cancer Research UK), the Made for Life Foundation (a local charity providing support for women with diagnosed cancer), the Royal British Legion and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Riding rain or shine

THE RN and RM Riding Stables at Bickleigh Barracks and Bickleigh Saddle Club (BSC) held their annual Pony Club awards. The event, which included a dog show and hog roast, proved to be extremely popular and provided a much-needed fundraiser for the club.

The Saddle Club and stables are a non-profit organisation dedicated to providing Service personnel and their families affordable equestrian activities. For further information, contact the stables on tel: 01752 727038 or visit the Club's website: www.bickleighsaddleclub.info.

IF RUNNING 90km for the 90 years of the British Legion whets your appetite, PO David McElwee plans to speed march the distance carrying full military patrol kit (a little over 55lbs, plus food and water) in order to raise funds for the cause.

Dave has recently completed his fifth tour of Afghanistan and is currently based in Portsmouth. Starting poignantly on November 11 at 2300, Dave's intended route takes him from Goathland in North Yorkshire via Guisborough, Maltby and Yarm to his home city, Middlesbrough, where he intends to arrive and lay a wreath at 1100 on Remembrance Sunday. Those with a calendar to hand will note that this gives him only 36 hours to complete the challenge.

"I have completed my tours safely in Afghanistan", reflects Dave, "whereas so many haven't; I therefore realise the contribution the Royal British Legion makes to people in worse circumstances than myself.

"I thought this would be a good time for me to do something to give back to them for all they do".

Dave has already raised £215 for the RBL; anyone wishing to support Dave can do so online at www.justgiving.com/90km-90years.

■ SEVEN runners from the Royal British Legion Riders Branch undertook seven 13km runs in the seven regions covered by the branch, in order to expand awareness and generate funds for the Poppy Appeal.

Three of the runners, WO1 Dai Charles RM, Sgt Nig Locke RNPDT &MC and CPO 'Tracker' Hansen, represented the Royal Navy and Royal Marines at the event, which was held in mid-May, managing to raise £2,500 between them.

The distance (though technically 90 kilometres and one for luck!) was chosen to symbolically represent the 90th anniversary of the Poppy Appeal.

Sailors' support for Ben Nevis success

A TEAM of 14 Royal Naval personnel from HM Naval Base Clyde helped a disabled woman's dream come true when they assisted her in scaling the heights of Ben Nevis.

Sally Hyder, who is restricted to a motorised wheel chair, had first attempted to scale the mountain last year, but a lack of support and equipment failure meant she had to put the attempt on hold.

Enter ex-sailor Ronnie Irvine, the fundraising partner for Canine Partners, who approached his old Navy colleagues at HM Naval Base Clyde for assistance with her next attempt.

The Naval Base's Physical Training Instructors took the lead, finding the manpower to make Sally's dream a reality in the form of over 25 RN and civilian staff.

POPT Richard Collins explained: "The Royal Navy team arrived at Kinlochleven on June 22 and we carried out a quick walk-through of the site.

"That day we carried 12 15-kilo batteries up the Ben, dropping them at key locations before camping for the night."

The next day at half-past three in the morning, Sally arrived at the bottom of Ben Nevis ready for her challenge.

Under the watchful eye of Royal Marine mountaineering expert Sgt Rodger Palin, the team soon set off on what would be a ten-hour journey to the top of Britain's highest mountain.

"There was some particularly boggy terrain along the way, and an initial river crossing," continued POPT Collins.

"Once we reached the tourist path there was a chance for everyone to get a bit of a rest before the beginning of a particularly difficult zig-zag stretch that consisted of shale and boulders."

There was also a 50-metre stretch of snow to negotiate, but Sally and her support team finally reached the summit just over five hours after setting off.

After the celebrations died down, it was time for the descent, with the team finally reaching the bottom base camp in nine hours and 59 minutes.

"It was a hard climb, but entirely worth it." Said POPT Collins.

"We are glad that we could help Sally achieve her dream and complete what was an amazing feat of endurance and perseverance."

Marathon Bob multiplies the miles

A FORMER petty officer partook in a 24-hour running relay in order to raise money and awareness for Cancer Research.

Bob Stafford, 48, who now works for VT Flagship at HMS Collingwood, ran as part of a team in mid July, and is believed to have covered around 26 miles between his shifts – just over a marathon.

His wife, Marina, and daughter, Michelle, have both commented on how hard he has worked to turn his fitness around.

Training diligently with the Fareham Crusaders Running Club for the last six months, Rob was inspired to take up the challenge by a family event; his father was recently diagnosed with lung cancer.

"As you may be aware, this illness will affect (in different ways) one in three people – I never thought I'd be one of them.

"I'm training every Tuesday evening and have been running approximately 15 to 20 miles per week".

As *Navy News* went to press, Rob was well on his way to smashing his fundraising target of £400.

Donations can be made via <http://www.donatetomyrelay.org/bobstafford>



RN team US 'sup



AS A Sea King Mk 7 Airborne Surveillance and Control (ASaC) Observer with numerous embarkations on all three Royal Navy Invincible-class aircraft carriers and a short detachment to the French carrier FS Charles de Gaulle, I was looking forward to my next appointment when I walked into Navy Command HQ (NCHQ) at Whale Island on October 18 2010.

I had spent the previous six years as a front-line Sea King ASaC mission commander and had recently returned from my second Op Herrick tour.

Prior to that, whilst embarked, I had many memories of embarkations with Sea Harrier and Joint Force Harrier squadrons, so walking into the appointment of Force Generation for the Carrier Strike capability team at NCHQ was a challenge that I was looking forward to.

After my first day, as I was

Lt Cdr Jim Hall led a small team of Royal Navy personnel onboard new American aircraft carrier USS George HW Bush to familiarise themselves with US Navy aviation. Here are his first impressions. Pictures by team member and former Navy photographer **Lt Richie Moss**

still unpacking in the wardroom, the news broke that the Strategic Defence and Security Review would retire HMS Ark Royal from service, which would result in a capability gap of carrier strike within the RN until the introduction of the two Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers in conjunction with the Lightning F-35C Joint Strike Fighter.

Suddenly, my memories of STOVL (Short Take-Off, Vertical Landing) carrier operations were thrust to the back of my mind





n learn from percarrier'

as I thought about what I had learnt onboard the French aircraft carrier, as my only experience of a conventional carrier and the use of catapults and arrestor gear.

It was only a few weeks later when the opportunity to embark on the USS George HW Bush arose in discussions, and before I had time to think of the potential embarkation I was tasked with putting together a small team to embark for three weeks whilst the ship was to transit from the Eastern seaboard of the USA across the Atlantic to participate in Exercise Saxon Warrior.

At this point I did not realise that this would be the maiden deployment for CVN-77 and a small piece of history in the US Navy.

As time progressed, it was not long before my team of nine personnel departed Heathrow to join the ship in Norfolk, Virginia.

As we sailed in the early hours of May 11 it was apparent that we were part of a special occasion.

The ship's company were addressed not just by the captain and embarked carrier strike group admiral, but also by the ship's

namesake, President George Herbert Walker Bush.

President Bush Senior had been a naval aviator during World War 2, and at one stage was the youngest front-line aviator flying the Avenger aircraft.

The ship had its very own tribute room to his flying career, including footage of a sea rescue after his aircraft had been shot down at the expense of his two fellow crew members.

The hangar of CVN-77 even has a large bronze statue of him overlooking the carefully-choreographed aircraft movements and constant buzz of aircraft engineers attending to an air wing of over 60 F/A-18 Hornet strike fighters and a small complement of helicopters and large fixed-wing aircraft.

After a few days of trying to find our way around the ship we had located the essential requirements of a cabin, scrum and the gym.

More importantly, we had found the Starbucks coffee shop.

However, we were there to see how the US Navy aviators conducted carrier aviation.

Now I am not a regular ballet follower, but I can only describe the co-ordination and teamwork

on the flight deck as what it might be like to see a professional ballet performance.

It was very obvious that the guys and girls who spent their working day in the "flight deck office" had an immense sense of camaraderie and everybody knew not only what they had to do individually but also what the team members around them were doing and what would happen next.

I would hope that the pictures here give a small insight to this but unfortunately you need to be stood on the flight deck a few feet from an F/A-18 launched by a catapult or catching "the wire" to feel the buzz and morale that every individual has subscribed to.

Overall, the feeling from the UK sea riders was that the professionalism and enthusiasm apparent within the US Navy became infectious during the time onboard.

The ship and its maritime air group were obviously integrated and committed to the deployment that they were starting.

The tasks that they were likely to face as they spent seven months away from their families did not appear to faze the ships' company, and they were fully committed to the role that they played in ensuring that the jets and helicopters could take off and land safely onboard the ship.

My team and I were made to feel very welcome by our US Navy colleagues, and undoubtedly there will need to be further opportunities like this in the future if the RN is going to be able to gain the right experience in the ship's company that will be asked to endure the arduous conditions and the specialist nature of the maritime operating environment.

● Clockwise from top: a Seahawk lands on the busy flight deck of USS George HW Bush during Exercise Saxon Warrior; the Aircraft Weight Board operator shows the 'catapult shooter' the weight settings of the aircraft to be applied to the catapult tensioner; an aircraft handler, seen through the catapult steam, cons the next aircraft on to the catapult during Saxon Warrior shortly after an aircraft has launched; The George HW Bush at sea during Saxon Warrior; aircraft handlers having a bit of fun in between deck operations; an F/A-18 Super Hornet lands on deck during Ex Saxon Warrior; the catapult director waves off the catapult attach prior to Carrier Onboard Delivery (COD) C-2A Greyhound aircraft launch

Big ship – big numbers

THE Royal Navy's Queen Elizabeth-class carriers will see the UK return to big carrier operations – but at 65,000 tons HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales will still be dwarfed by their American counterparts.

USS George HW Bush, the tenth and final of the Nimitz-class 'supercarriers', displaces around 100,000 tons, and is designed for a 50-year service life.

Each of the Nimitz-class carriers cost about \$4.5 billion, and the George HW Bush, which had a seven-year construction timeframe, was built in modular fashion, as is the case with the new British carriers.

The ship is 333 metres long – that's almost the same as the height of the Empire State Building – and her flight deck is some 4.5 acres in area, capable of handling complex air operations involving more than 80 combat aircraft as well as support planes and helicopters.

Four high speed aircraft lifts, each of more than 4,000 square feet, transfer aircraft between the

flight deck and the hangar.

Her two nuclear reactors power her through the oceans at speeds in excess of 30 knots, driving four 30-ton bronze propellers, each 21ft across, the ship is steered by two rudders, each 29ft by 22ft and weighing 50 tons.

For landings, the 'trap' element involves three 2in diameter arresting wires on the deck which bring a 20-ton aircraft from 150 mph to a stop in less than 400ft.

With a full air wing of almost 2,500 personnel embarked, USS George HW Bush carries almost 6,000 men and women with her when she deploys.

When deployed she carries enough food and supplies to operate for 90 days, with over 18,000 meals served daily.

Her distillation plants provide 400,000 gallons of fresh water from sea water daily, which would be enough to supply 2,000 homes.

There are almost 30,000 light fixtures and 1,600 miles of cable and wiring on board, and she supports a network of 1,400 telephones.





'Unforgettable

ENJOY the stunning images on these pages, for it is the last time you will see many of them.

This is the final chance to see iconic ships and aircraft on active service.

So it is poignantly fitting that photographs featuring the last hurrahs of HMS Ark Royal and Harrier jump jets were singled out at the 'Oscars' of the Royal Navy Photographic Branch, the 2011 Peregrine Trophy.

The final months of Ark's life were recorded by PO(Phot) Ray Jones and LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd, whose images earned the great carrier one final decoration in a career spanning a quarter of a century: the **Peregrine Trophy**, presented annually to the RN photographic unit with the most impressive portfolio (**No.8**).

PO Jones (now in charge of the photographic section on HMS Illustrious) and LA Gadd (now serving at the Fleet Photographic Unit on Whale Island) recorded moments at both ends of the emotional spectrum in Ark's final weeks under the White Ensign.

"It seems quite fitting that the Ark's final few months have been recognised with this award," said PO Jones.

"We had a busy few months on board covering everything from a visit by the

Queen to the last Harrier launch from a carrier.

"As a section manager, the Peregrine Trophy is the one thing that you secretly hope to win – and for a two-person section to win it is absolutely fantastic."

The Mighty Ark fell victim to last autumn's Strategic Defence and Security Review, as did the aircraft tightly bound with the carrier, the Harrier jump jet.

The last flight of the fabled aircraft in December generated international media coverage. In the final hours before the jets' curtain call, LA(Phot) Alex Knott recorded a naval aviator conducting checks on his Harrier. The evocative black and white image earned the photographer the **Best Maritime Image Award (No.9)**.

The announcement of the Harriers' demise came just days after 800 Naval Air Squadron returned from Cyprus where the famous squadron helped hone the skills of troops about to deploy to Afghanistan.

The clear skies also afforded the squadron's photographer LA(Phot) Luis Holden the chance to picture a Harrier banking high above RAF Akrotiri – and take the **Navy News Award** for our favourite image of the past 12 months (**No.6**).

Away from the defence review, military news has been dominated by

two conflicts: Afghanistan and Libya.

Rightly, images from both feature prominently in this year's awards.

LA(Phot) Si Ethell's tour of duty with 40 Commando in Helmand last year earned him the **Commandant General Royal Marines Prize (No.4)** courtesy of some arresting front-line images...

... and the commandos' return to Norton Manor provided LA(Phot) Kyle Heller with a picture-perfect moment as families were reunited. He took the **Media Operations Award** for the image which has the most impact as a news photograph (**No.7**).

A light-hearted moment aboard HMS St Albans – two stokers 'swimming' as the frigate tested her pre-wetting system to wash off any nasties such as chemical or biological agents – earned LA(Phot) Steve Johncock the **'Life Without Limits' Award (No.5)**.

"I hope the image shows that, although our trips away on ship can be long and arduous, the guys and girls onboard still retain a good sense of humour and take advantage of any opportunity to boost morale," said 35-year-old Steve, who's picked up a trophy at the last three Peregrines.

"Naval photographers pull out all the stops to get the best and most exciting images to show off the talents of the branch – it's not just point and shoot."

A name likely in these pages that of LA(Phot) impressive port fellow photogra meant he was **Year (No.1)**.

Away from th photography, Fi Mark Stanhope to amateur cam in Trinity House,

LA(SE) Bri RNAS Culdrose **Photographer o** while Lt Mike C **Amateur Open** Gordon Russe **Amateur Mariti**

There were j to this year's known affection branch simply a name from the \$ was once the photography.

Leading Fleet picture editor submissions, 1 hundreds of sub footage before p "There is no quality of the ir Royal Navy's





2

e moments'

to feature prominently in coming editions is Jason Ballard whose photo (including a shot of photo trainee Joel Rouse) named **Student of the**

the world of professional first Sea Lord Admiral Sir also presented awards to the ceremony in London.

an Aitkenhead from took the **RN Amateur of the Year (No.10)**, and of 702 NAS won the **Category** and LET(WE) triumphed in the **Category (No.2)**.

just shy of 400 entries competition, which is nately throughout the as 'Peres' and takes its Sussex air station which home of Royal Navy

t Street photographers, s and, for video V editors, look at omissions and hours of picking the winners.

doubting the superb images produced by the photographers," said

Admiral Stanhope.

"The images are a perfect way of illustrating what the Navy does today around the world – and provide genuine insight into the role of the Royal Navy.

"Whether it's a major conflict or a touching moment when families are reunited, the Navy's 'photos' are invariably on hand to record the unforgettable moments."

Today the RN photographic branch is around 100 strong, split between men and women who capture every aspect of life in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, at home and abroad, in war and peace, and the less-sung world of image analysis.

The latter provide key intelligence from gathering material on suspicious activities on the high seas (such as pirates off Somalia) to spending hours poring over satellite and other photographs looking for key clues which will shape operations on the ground, in particular in Afghanistan.

Sadly, you won't see their work... but you may well read about the effects of it in the newspapers...

And finally... What was it Meatloaf sang?

No, not *Bat Out of Hell*.

Two out of three ain't bad.

Nor is three out of ten.

Three of the ten professional awards

– including the most coveted in the realm of Royal Navy photography went to one man.

Currently based at CTCRM in Lympstone, PO(Phot) Sean Clee is the **RN Photographer of the Year (No.3)** for an unprecedented third time (he's already the only person to win it twice in the award's history...).

Unlike, say, the World or European Cups, there's no chance of the Royal Navy Photographer of the Year Trophy sitting on the Clee mantelpiece in perpetuity – there is no trophy, just a title (and a fair bit of kudos).

For good measure, he also collected the **Video Production Award** and the **Maritime Air Prize**.

Sean's spent 21 years in the Service after initially working as a coal miner. He's been a photographer for the past 11 years and seen action in Iraq and Afghanistan, where he was also wounded in action.

It was another conflict, Libya, which helped the senior rating bag the 2011 title courtesy of some time with HMS Westminster in the Gulf of Sirte.

"Winning photographer of the year is the cherry on the cake. I worked really hard this year both in Afghanistan and off the coast of Libya and feel this is a just reward," says the 43-year-old former missile man.



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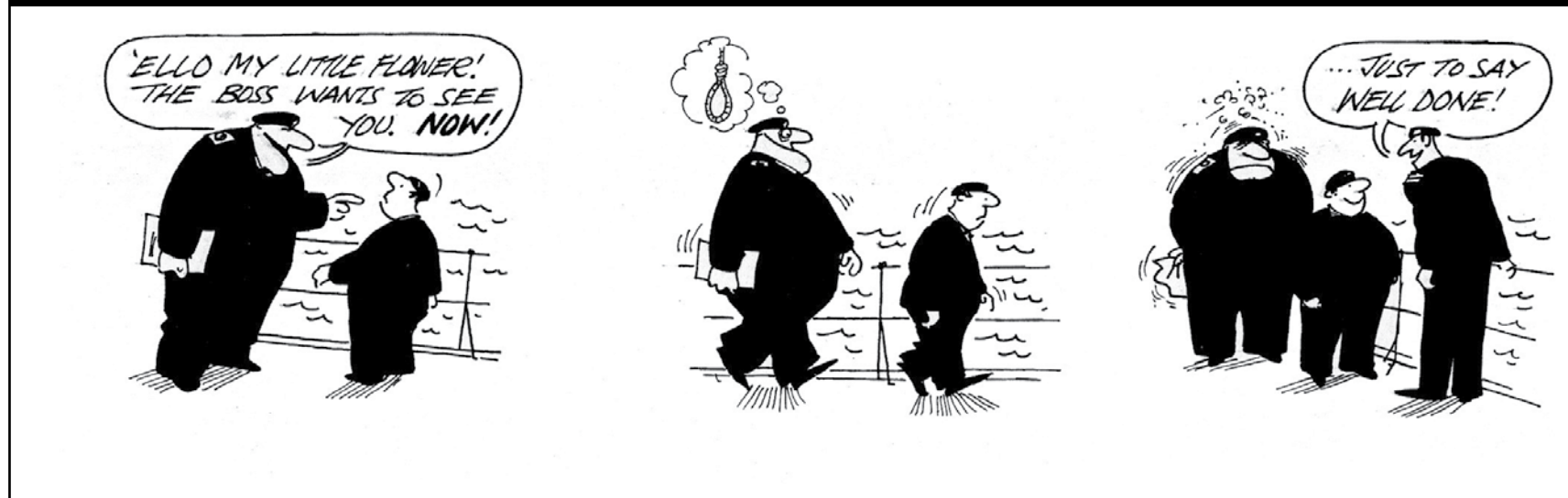


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CLASSIC JACK



Dragon to the rescue

THE crew of Sceptre, the 1958 America's Cup challenger which lost steerage near the Mull of Kintyre, are most grateful to HMS Dragon for responding to their emergency call, and for their help in keeping the yacht away from the coast until the lifeboat arrived.

Having been built in Holy Loch in 1957-8, Sceptre is well-known on the West Coast of Scotland, and the Sceptre Preservation Society hopes that she will be back sailing again very soon.

Jenny Ball, Sceptre Preservation Society

Wiped out in Crete

MY LATE father took part in the evacuation of Crete in 1941 when he was First Lieutenant in HMS Abdiel, a fast minelayer.

I well remember him telling me of the total exhaustion of the ship's company when they were ordered by Admiral Cunningham to return to Crete time and time again to pick up soldiers from towns' moles or beaches.

I believe Abdiel was the only ship that was not hit during the evacuation. This may have been due to the fact of her fast speed of around 45 knots when flat out.

If the RAF had been around, the story might have been very different and we would have held Crete.

I enjoyed the article, although it made sad reading.

Timothy Chavasse, Kinsale, Co Cork

We happy few

EVERY three months, at our local Veterans' Park, the names of veterans who have passed away, or, as Navy lore has it, 'crossed the bar' are read out by members of various veterans' associations.

At the most recent event, veterans of World War 2 were asked to stand to be recognised.

As I stood up, I looked around and, to my surprise, I was the only one standing!

It was a sobering reminder that we are leaving this 'mortal coil' at an alarming rate, but at the age of 90, I sent greetings to all those who served in the Royal Navy in 'our war' with the hope that they feel as spry as I do.

And wouldn't it be wonderful if we could all answer the call *Up Spirits* together?

Ken Tipper, Ocala, Florida

Broadsword's metric mayhem

NAVY News has featured the paying off of HMS Cornwall and HMS Cumberland and the end of the Type 22 frigate era.

In 1974, I was a MOD (Naval) overseer at Yarrow Shipbuilders Ltd and one of my jobs was overseeing the build of the first of the Type 22 frigates, HMS Broadsword, also known as the first metric warship of 4,000 tonnes.

We each got a copy of a little booklet translating imperial to metric sizes.

The confusion among shipyard workers and ourselves was notable with such comments as: 'The steel plates were ten feet by four feet by ten millimetres' or 'the wood needed is 2.15m by 76mm by a quarter of an inch...'

This class of ship was one of the first to have routes designed to allow access for shipping or removing machinery such as steel decks, etc.

One task which I was given was to co-ordinate with the shipyard people, other overseers and the design sections at Bath, the tenth or other scale models being built so that space could be allocated before fitting out the various equipment.

Associated with this, I also co-ordinated the full size or scaled-down mock-ups, for example the bow unit and the ship's anchors and chain cables.

These were known simply as models and mock-ups, which degenerated into 'muddles and muckups' by some cynics.

The earlier T22s were built within the covered slipways but later versions protruded beyond the shed.

Years later, I basically finished my career with MOD(N) in Rosyth as Deputy Project Manager during the refit of the Type 22 frigate HMS Coventry, which sailed from Devonport to Rosyth with Babcock's Ltd staff and the MOD(N) Superintendent's team, including myself, onboard.

Jim Jarvie, Dumfermline, Fife

As one who dislikes metrication and loses no opportunity to restore kilometres to miles, I can't help thinking of the fate of NASA's Mars Climate Orbiter, which was lost because metric and imperial units were accidentally combined

Managing Ed

Protect them wheresoe'er they go

YOUR article (July) on the new HMS Protector gave a brief history of the fifth ship of that name which operated 'down south' between 1955-68.

But it goes on to say that over the next four years, during breaks from patrol duties down south, a flight deck and hangar were added for two Westland Whirlwind helicopters.

Not so. The flight deck and hangar were fitted in the 1955 Devonport refit and the helicopters were on board for the first commission, 1955-56.

I remember my first sight of Protector as an 18-year-old stoker. As we marched from Drake barracks to work on Protector in dry dock we saw this strange structure which we took to be something belonging to the dockyard mates.

But it was Protector's hangar, resembling a domestic garage and giving the ship an alarmingly unstable appearance.

The naval architects must have known what they were about because she coped with some enormous seas during her career down south.

There are many pictures taken during that first commission down south, showing Protector complete with flight deck, hangar and helicopters.

Tony 'Nick' Carter, Morecambe, Lancs



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is: Tony 'Nick' Carter

● HMS Protector, A146, entering Portsmouth in 1968



A timely paying off

IN the July 2008 edition you were kind enough to insert a short piece calling for reminiscences of Captain John Leach of HMS Prince of Wales at a time when I was researching on behalf of the American author Matthew B Wills.

I was pleased to see the review of the published biography in the July edition, so *Navy News* was in at the beginning and the end.

It was sad that Sir Henry Leach died just a few days before formal publication but, knowing the end could be near, we fortunately were able to arrange with the publisher that a single digital copy complete with dustcover was produced, inscribed by the author and sent to the admiral three weeks earlier, and this gave him pleasure.

Another subject. Not so long ago, we used to talk

of ships 'paying off' when they came to the end of their commission but this fine old naval term seems to have fallen into disuse and been supplanted by the ugly expression 'decommissioning'.

I think 'paying off' was well understood and, for instance, a ship would be described as entering port 'flying her paying off pennant' like HMS Gloucester on page 5 of the July edition of *Navy News*.

'Decommissioning' may be technically correct, but how sad it is to erase a little bit of Navy terminology.

I wonder whether you would be prepared to restore its use in your columns, perhaps thereby giving a lead to its general resuscitation in conversation and elsewhere?

Just a thought.

Douglas Hadler, Bromley, Kent

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E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone. If you submit a

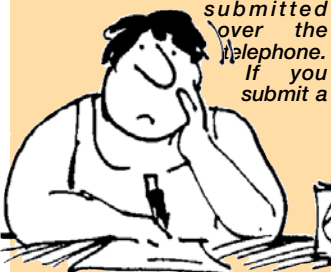
photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.

Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



opinion

AN IMPORTANT milestone was passed in Afghanistan at the end of July, when the Sea King Mk 7 Force from Culdrose completed its 1,000th operational mission.

Since May 2009, the Culdrose-based helicopters from 857 and 854 Squadrons have been making a massive – though invariably unsung – contribution to the overall mission in Afghanistan by offering land surveillance from their base in Camp Bastion.

Designed to operate as 'flying radar stations', providing Royal Navy ships with protection against low-flying enemy aircraft and missiles, these Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control helicopters are proving themselves equally effective operating over land – as they did in Iraq back in 2003.

In the skies over southern Afghanistan, their aircrew are identifying arms, vehicles laden with fertiliser to make explosive devices, drugs, and suspected insurgents. The aircrew then direct ground forces to investigate and if necessary destroy the targets.

The 1,000th mission milestone may have largely passed unmarked in the wider world, but it is further proof, if it were needed, of the versatility of our men and women.

And it is a timely reminder that, in addition to the green berets of 3 Commando Brigade, there is a very substantial 'dark blue' presence in Afghanistan right now – some 700 men and women proving their ability to operate as effectively in the air, and on land, as at sea.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

● **The dramatic conclusion of Yeovilton Air Day – the commando assault**
Picture: CPO(Phot) Susan Emery and AET Tony Scott



Show stoppers

THIS IS a magnificent sight probably not witnessed in half a century – a Vulcan bomber and a Sea Vixen share the same airspace.

The two veteran jets were two of the 'performers' enjoyed by 30,000 people who poured through the gates of RNAS Yeovilton for the air station's annual air day.

The appearance of a V Bomber and V Fighter together (typically they only perform separately) proved to be a real crowdpleaser during a day's flying by aircraft from all over the world.

If not blessed by wonderful weather then at least not blighted by too much rain, the 2011 air day was a celebration of 40 years of the Lynx, the FAA's agile helicopter which still serves on the front line daily.

Yeovilton is home of the RN's Lynx – 700W NAS for the new Wildcat, 702 NAS to prepare pilots and observers for front-line duties with 815 NAS which supports the destroyer and frigate fleets, and the green and grey camouflaged 'skidded' Lynx of 847 which serve in Afghanistan with the Commando Helicopter Force.

So it was only right that the air display opened with a 'diamond nine' formation of Lynx from 702 and 815, plus the first formation from a Wildcat.

Then it was time for the Wildcat, which will replace the existing Mk8 Lynx currently flown by 815, to perform solo, showing it possesses all the agility and speed of its forebears.

Not to be outdone, the Mk8s showed what they're

capable of in skilled hands as the RN's own helicopter display team, the Black Cats, pirouetted above the airfield.

Other aircraft performing to the crowds included Belgian F16s, Polish MiG29 Fulcrums and the Jordanian Falcons aerobatic team.

As ever, air day closed with the trademark Commando Helicopter Display – a combination of some impressive aerial manoeuvres by the Commando Helicopter Force, lots of pyrotechnics and explosions, vehicles trundling around on the ground and some Oscar-worthy performances from Royal Marines playing good (and bad) guys.

"I think Air Day 2011 has been an amazing success," said the Yeovilton's Commanding Officer Cdre Paul Chivers. "The principal aim of air day is to give the public a close look at a busy, operation air station and showcase what we do. Many people are not aware of how busy the FAA is – and if we have succeeded in raising that awareness, then we've had a successful day."



Sultan shrugs off showers

TRAINING base HMS Sultan pulled out all the stops on the weekend of June 18-19 for a spectacular Sultan Summer Show.

Despite occasional showers, the event was thoroughly enjoyed by children and adults alike and all proceeds from ticket sales going to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

The curiously-named 'Big Pete and the Grim Reaper' (actually a monster truck display team) drew the largest crowds, with the highlight of the display being a tug-of-war in which a family car was literally pulled in half...

Other attractions included the Voluntary Cadet Corps Field Gun competition, in which the home team emerged victorious, the Imps motorcycle display team (pictured above by LA(Phot) Jay Allen) while the Royal Marines Band were present throughout the day, providing music to the concluding ceremonial sunset.

Unsurprisingly, the highlight of the day for many, both civilians and matelots alike, came in the form of the show's very own water-torture clinic. Cdr Mike Young observed: "It is surprising how, no matter how old you may

be, watching someone get soaked never stops being fun."

No member of the stone frigate's company was off limits, with proceedings being opened by the Commanding Officer, Cdre Mark Slawson, who endured almost 30 minutes of continuous soaking on both days.

Lt Andy Young said: "There really was something for everyone, and there was a great atmosphere despite the showers."

To date, the weekend has raised an impressive £27,000, with donations and funding still being received.



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RN 'unsung hero' is rewarded

ONE of the Royal Navy's unsung heroes has been rewarded for his professionalism and dedication at NATO's headquarters.

LLogs (CS) Dave Price (*above*) is a leading chef at SHAPE (Supreme HQ Allied Powers Europe) in Brussels, and has just left his job at the kitchens of the UK Joint Support Unit after almost three years.

Before leaving Dave was presented with the Senior British Officer's Commendation, awarded by Gen Sir Richard Sherriff.

The citation talks of Dave's "exceptional" dedication to his job and his willingness to take on extra work, to cover manning gaps, and his tireless support of charities, including SSAFA Forces Help and Help for Heroes, which often meant long hours cooking and preparing food in his own time.

"He is very much an unsung hero, regularly sacrificing his personal time for the benefit of others and the best of British Cuisine," according to the citation.

His colleagues regard him as an excellent ambassador, not just for the Royal Navy but for the UK as a whole.

Dave appreciates degree of flexibility

A WARRANT OFFICER on a survey vessel has managed to squeeze a degree course into his working life, thanks to the Open University.

WO2 Dave Joyce, from Helensburgh, has graduated with a BA (Hons).

The senior rate, who is currently the Deputy Weapon Engineering Officer in survey ship HMS Enterprise, said: "I chose to do a degree with the Open University as a constructive way to occupy my spare time and as a personal challenge.

"Completing a degree whilst doing a full-time and diverse job has been a hugely satisfying achievement which will, hopefully, stand me in good stead for a second career once my military career comes to an end."



● Naval Secretary Rear Admiral David Steel (second left) with Cdr Ken McKenzie (left), George Brann and Lt Cdr Toby Evison

Personnel praise

WHILE those on the front line deservedly win praise for their dedication and courage, a senior Naval officer is ensuring that the efforts of those who support them are also recognised.

Chief of Staff (Personnel) Rear Admiral David Steel held a ceremony at the National Museum for the Royal Navy in Portsmouth to present three certificates of commendation to people who have made outstanding contributions

NAVY officer Lt Kathryn Drinkall was amongst the delighted staff and VIP guests who watched as 850 new Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers proudly paraded to mark the end of their training at the new Regional Military Training Centre (South West).

Located at Camp Shorabak, part of the Camp Bastion complex in Helmand Province,

RMTC(SW) turns raw recruits from all over Afghanistan into trained soldiers, ready to join their kandaks (regiments) on operations in Helmand.

The intensive two-month Basic Warrior Training Course covers military subjects and gives recruits literacy and numeracy skills.

More than 80 per cent of the course achieved a literacy qualification and 38 warriors were awarded Level 3 certificates,

the highest set by the Afghan Government Ministry of Education.

Lt Drinkall, Literacy Mentor to RMTC(SW), is pleased at the efforts made by students and staff.

"The literacy rate amongst the Afghan National Army (ANA) is currently around 20 per cent," said Lt Drinkall.

"To get an 80 per cent pass rate on the first course at RMTC is a tremendous achievement for the recruits and instructors alike.



● Zack Barclay takes the opportunity to explore HMS Example in Blyth

Example proves Ultra supportive

PATROL boat HMS Example made the short journey from the River Tyne to the River Blyth to help launch Northumberland's newest radio station.

Commanding Officer Lt Nelson McMillan and his crew opened their ship to the general public at Blyth and invited volunteers from Bedlington-based Ultra Radio to meet the Navy.

Lt McMillan, at 29, is one of the Navy's youngest serving COs, and heads up the University RN Unit (URN) where students from Durham, Newcastle and Northumbria universities learn about naval life.

Time spent on board allows students to gain practical experience in seamanship, navigation and engineering skills.

Sailing from the Tyne to Blyth were a small crew from Ultra Radio, the North East's latest community radio, which on June 7 started broadcasting on 87.7FM to Morpeth, Bedlington, Ashington, Cramlington, Newbiggin by the Sea and Blyth.

Mid-morning Ultra presenter Phil Grice spent some of the time gathering material for a documentary about his stint on board Example, and was delighted with his seafaring experience.

"This was a tremendous opportunity to let the public see how a Royal Navy vessel operates," he said.

"We had a great time interviewing the crew and her visitors from Blyth, and we'll play back the recordings on my show on Ultra Radio.

"The passage to Blyth was a bit bumpy but the welcome from the people of Blyth more than made up for it."

Lt McMillan agreed: "The Royal Navy has a close link with the people of Blyth and our traditional association, together with this exciting and brand new community radio station, can only be of benefit to everyone concerned.

"We really look forward to returning soon and listening to Ultra Radio too."

Friends on the front line

IN THE UK, they live just minutes apart and often share a drink together at the end of a hard week.

In Afghanistan, Cpl Lee Simpson, Mne Kevin Povey and Cpl Jimmy Edmunds are rarely more than a few feet from each other and rely on one another to get through a gruelling six month tour away from their families.

The three Royal Marines are all serving in Lima Company (L Coy) of 42 Commando in the heart of the Green Zone in Central Helmand.

They and their colleagues were recently at the forefront of a major operation involving British and Afghan forces which saw them enter insurgent territory to drive out the enemy and bring more people under the protective security of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Afghan National Security Forces.

Cpl Edmunds (*left of picture*) is a signaller, responsible for the maintenance and care of all the communications equipment when L Coy is out on the ground.

It's his job to make sure that the Company Commander can keep in touch with other units and HQ to keep them up to date with

what's going on.

The 32-year-old, who used to be a dairy herdsman but joined the Royal Marines in 2004, says that so far the tour has lived up to his expectations:

"I like having the opportunity to get out and about and see the area of Nad-e Ali North where 42 Cdo are based.

"It's busy but it's interesting. We recently took over a new checkpoint and it was my job to set up all the signalling equipment, from antennae to radios, to enable the checkpoint to have comms with the bosses back at HQ.

"We've had quite a few contacts with the insurgents, especially during Omid Haft, but we do feel we're providing a safe and secure environment for locals to live without fear of intimidation."

Cpl Simpson (*right of picture*), who is Jimmy's neighbour on the married patch in Plymouth, is a Royal Military Policeman who is attached to 42 Cdo.

"I get involved in a number of jobs, from the arresting and detaining of insurgents to the preservation of evidence," he said.

"So far the tour has been better than I thought. We've all knitted together extremely well showing

"It is an honour to be part of the mentoring team working with the ANA and see the progress that has been made."

Col Shah Wali, the Commanding Officer of RMTC(SW), is keen to stress that literacy and numeracy skills are amongst the most highly-rated benefits for ANA recruits, and of national importance.

"Literacy training is an important part of training for the ANA, and, overall, for Afghanistan," he said.

The 850 are the first ANA warriors to graduate at the centre, and the course has been hailed as a major success, with almost every recruit who joined up present at the final passing-out parade.

The course is run and delivered by a cadre of highly-experienced ANA personnel, assisted by a multinational team drawn from the International Security Force Afghanistan (ISAF).

C Team the right track

NETWORK Rail proved it can shift more than passengers and freight.

The company is also pretty adept at shifting a field gun – taking the top two places at the annual Junior Leaders Field Gun competition at HMS Collingwood.

Now in its fourth year, the competition mirrors the RN senior contest, but is predominantly for youths aged 18-25 who have just joined the Forces, just begun an apprenticeship with a major commercial organisation, or who are studying at local colleges.

The event is designed to give youngsters the chance to work as part of a team, and gives them a week of dedicated training before the competition itself.

Out on the track, it was Network Rail C who took the title from their B-team compatriots, with RAF Cosford in third place.

Behind them were BAE Systems A, HMS Sultan and Network Rail A.

Other teams competing included the Prince's Trust and Highbury, Portsmouth and Fareham Colleges.



● Samantha Dickson (right) receives her medal from Navy Command Secretary Liz Cassidy

Picture: LA(Phot) Gary Weatherston

In graphic detail

A NAVY graphics officer who worked with the US Marine Corps' PsyOps Cell in Afghanistan has been presented with her Operational Service Medal.

Samantha Dickson, of the Fleet Publications and Graphics Organisation, was the only MOD civilian in the Fires and Effects Coordination Centre, deployed on combat operations alongside the US Marines and British military.

As the sole Graphics Officer employed within Information Operations, using a broad range of graphic design and communication skills, Samantha

worked within the Perception Cell that was responsible for influencing and changing attitudes and perceptions towards both coalition forces and their aims and those of the insurgents.

Working long hours and to tight deadlines, Samantha visited other regions at great personal risk, and has created the foundation for future such work, including an intranet-accessible product book.

She was also awarded a prized Certificate of Commendation signed by Maj Gen John A Toolan, USMC Commanding.



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Hillhouse

the true *esprit de corps* that the Royals have."

Mne Povey, 24, knows that spirit all too well – this is his third tour of Afghanistan.

The signaller works alongside Cpl Edmunds, and this is his first Helmand summer.

"The tour so far has been hard both mentally and physically, with the heat often exceeding 45

degrees and carrying equipment over 90lbs," he said.

"Mental toughness is required to see you through the long days of patrolling and constant monitoring of communication systems.

"The lads of the company remain high-spirited though, and are definitely seeing a difference by giving the people of Afghanistan somewhere safe to live and work."

People inbrief

PUPILS and teachers from Collingwood Primary School in Kingston-upon-Hull have paid a visit to their namesake Naval establishment in Fareham.

The aim was to enable the pupils to appreciate the culture, history and military ethos of the Royal Navy. The youngsters, as well as their staff, were accommodated on site at HMS Collingwood.

The group also visited museums in Portsmouth and Gosport.

NAVY divers from the Northern Diving Group at Faslane laid on a demonstration for pupils and parents at the Hermitage Primary School Fun-Fest barbecue in Helensburgh.

Four of the bomb disposal experts took with them a selection of diving gear, scuba sets and helmets – and a Mk 8 Wheelbarrow, a remote-controlled bomb-disposal robot, which proved very popular with the youngsters.

The day raised £2,500 to help pay for a woodland trail being created behind the school.

THE Controller of the Royal Navy, Rear Admiral Amjad Hussain, has been awarded an honorary degree by the University of Durham in recognition of outstanding public service.

Rear Admiral Hussain was an undergraduate in Collingwood College at the university, leaving in 1979 with a degree in Engineering and Business Studies.

During 34 years in the Navy to date, Rear Admiral Hussain has carried out various operational roles at sea and been involved in strategic planning, and more recently was in charge of Portsmouth Naval Base, which he described as “running a large company, a small city and a major port simultaneously”.

A MEMBER of 705 Naval Air Squadron was part of a team which officially became the best helicopter pilots in the country.

JJ Jackson partnered Sqd Ldr Craig Finch, CO Defence Helicopter Flying School (DHFS) Standards, at the annual Helicopter Club of Great Britain Air Games, at Northampton.

And their success in tests of skill, speed and finesse means that DHFS will represent Great Britain in the World Helicopter Championships in Moscow next year.

705 NAS is the single-engine advanced training squadron of the DHFS, based at RAF Shawbury in Shropshire.

THERE is a new man at the head of the Navy's sea training organisation.

Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone has taken over as Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) from Rear Admiral Chris Snow, who leaves the Royal Navy after 35 years of service.

FOST is responsible for all training of RN and RM personnel at sea and in shore establishments, including Dartmouth, Lymington, HMS Raleigh, HMS Collingwood and submarine training at Faslane.

THE former Intelligence Officer at RNAS Culdrose has been awarded the Fleet Intelligence Trophy for his work at the Cornish air base and in Afghanistan.

The trophy, given by Northrop Grumman, was presented to Lt Cdr Daz Helsby, as he was deemed to have demonstrated “noteworthy contribution to Naval or Joint Intelligence”, with Culdrose squadrons enjoying a regular flow of high-quality intelligence material.

Take another bow

THEY were all winners, but just for the record, the organisers of the RN Theatre Association awards have asked us to print a correction to their list of star performers.

The best costume plaudits went to Tania Watt, Lisa Pitman and Angela Goble (Admiral's Players) and best make-up, hair and wigs to Bex Hannigan (Collingwood), not the other way round as originally submitted.



● *Vespers and Lambrettas: Rev Mike Brotherton is escorted to the Main Gate of HMS Drake on his scooter*

Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow

Mad Bish rides into the (Welsh) sunset

THE Royal Navy's self-styled 'Mad Bish' has retired following 27 years' service.

The Rev Mike Brotherton, 54, headed out of the Main Gate of HMS Drake for the last time in style – on the same Lambretta scooter he used to drive to his first job in the Royal Navy in 1984, when he became the Assistant Chaplain at HMS Collingwood, following initial training at Dartmouth.

During his Service career Mike has spent many months at sea.

He was Chaplain to the 4th Frigate Squadron, serving in HM Ships Active, Amazon, Ambuscade, Alacrity, Arrow and Avenger.

After taking up the post of Assistant Chaplain at HMS Drake in 1987, he created his first all-ranks coffee bar, and remained in the West Country by serving at HMS Raleigh for a year before heading east when he was appointed Chaplain to HMS Nelson in Portsmouth in 1990.

During his time at Nelson he built and established his second non-alcoholic project – the Blue Lamp Coffee Bar.

He was also Chaplain to the Portsmouth Field Gun crew and took part in charity work raising funds for cancer projects.

In 1993 Mike joined aircraft

carrier HMS Ark Royal in what he says was one of the highlights of his career.

In typical Brotherton fashion he arrived on board the ship, on patrol in the Adriatic, dressed as one of his favourite characters, Charlie Chaplin.

While on board Ark Royal he was awarded the MBE for his pastoral work to all ranks within the Navy.

A return to Collingwood in 1995 saw him organise the Charlie Chaplin Fun Run, from HMS Collingwood to Collingwood House in Northumberland, raising funds for King George's Fund for Sailors and Simon Weston's charity the Weston Spirit.

Mike went on to set up a third non-alcoholic project at Collingwood – the Chaplin's coffee bar was opened by the then First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Jock Slater.

In 1997 Mike returned to the 4th Frigate Squadron, and during this time he was constantly at sea, crossing the Atlantic three times within one year in three different ships.

Latterly Mike returned to the West Country, serving at RN Air Station Culdrose in Helston and the RN Training School HMS Raleigh, with two years on board the Navy's largest warship,

Dave's team shoot for ultimate glory

AN officer from the Navy's Search and Rescue squadron in Cornwall has proved himself a top gun by leading a combat shooting team to glory at the Naval Air Command Skill-at-Arms competition at Bisley.

Lt Dave Anderson's team of 11 Fleet Air Arm matelots and a solitary crab from RAF Cottesmore have been on a strict training regime for several months, receiving advice and individual coaching to prepare them for the arduous competition.

And the rewards for success include possible inclusion in the Central Skill-at-Arms

(CENTSAAM) meeting against the best of the Army and RAF.

Culdrose won all the team trophies while Lt Anderson, of 771 Naval Air Squadron, swept the board in the individual competitions.

The Commanding Officer of 771 NAS, Lt Cdr Chris 'Damage' Canning said: "This has been a well-deserved result for Dave and his team, proving that the training, commitment and determination which are key tenets of the Royal Navy's ethos, have been so worthwhile."

Dave will be defending his title at the CENTSAAM meeting.

Devonport-based assault ship HMS Ocean – and taking a major role in the popular BBC1 series *Shipmates*.

He was also the Chaplain at the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation in Plymouth and, lastly, at HMS Drake.

Capt Mark Knibbs, Captain of the Base, was at Drake Gate to lead the emotional farewell of colleagues and friends as Mike departed.

Mike said: "I'm driving out of these gates after a fantastic 27 years in the Royal Navy."

"It is the end of one era but the

beginning of a new life adventure and I look forward to my time in Pembrokeshire."

One major event that Mike will be undertaking later in the year is the annual Ride to the Wall event which is held at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

The charity event is held for bikers to pay their respects to those serving and fallen in the Armed Forces.

Mike will be conducting the Act of Remembrance at the Memorial Wall, with money raised going to the arboretum.

Culdrose duo pass 3,000 hours

THE Commanding Officer and Senior Pilot of a Navy Merlin squadron have both clocked up 3,000 flying hours as aircrew.

Cdr Gavin Richardson, who has been CO of 824 Naval Air Squadron at RN Air Station Culdrose since November 2009, flew his 3,000th hour instructing a trainee Observer in a Merlin Mk 1.

And Lt Cdr Pete Haywood flew his 3,000th hour on an instructional sortie in the same type of aircraft.

Cdr Richardson joined the Navy in 1991, training as an Observer on Sea Kings then Merlins, specialising in anti-submarine warfare.

He saw service in the former Yugoslavia and has done a tour with 771 search and rescue squadron, but has spent much of his flying career training new aircrew.

Lt Cdr Haywood joined a year later than his boss, piloting Sea Kings (both anti-submarine and airborne early warning) and Merlins as well as teaching novice Fleet Air Arm pilots the basics of helicopter flying in the single-engined Squirrel.

Lt Cdr Haywood – who said his only regret was that his CO got to the landmark before he did – moves on to a new role in HMS Illustrious, now configured for helicopter operations.

Duke of York at Culdrose

THE Duke of York has paid a visit to RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall in his role as Commodore-in-Chief Fleet Air Arm.

Prince Andrew, who trained as a helicopter pilot at Culdrose in 1981, travelled to Cornwall to mark the arrival of the UK Flying Training System at the air station.

The system is a tri-Service flying training organisation which uses the new King Air Avengers of 750 Naval Air Squadron to train Naval Observers and RAF and Army Air Corps navigators before they move on to more advanced equipment.

The Duke was met by Capt Toby Williamson, the CO of Culdrose, and Cdre Martin Westwood, Assistant Chief of Staff (Carrier Strike and Aviation).



Newest 'Yottie' unveiled

A NEW Yottie has joined the former Royal Yacht at Leith in Scotland.

The life-sized bronze statue of a Royal Yachtsman was unveiled during a week-long visit by more than 60 real-life Yotties, who travelled to Edinburgh's port to catch up with each other and help the current maintenance team with work on the ship.

The statue was unveiled by Rear Admiral Neil

Rankin, chairman of the Royal Yacht Britannia Trust (left of picture) and former Yottie Dixie Dean, watched by Chief Executive of the Royal Yacht Britannia, Bob Downie, and marks Britannia's status as the official HQ of the Association of Royal Yachtsmen.

This was the sixth visit by the group since the Yacht decommissioned in 1997, and allowed them to tell visitors about life on board for the 240 ship's company.



Beacons prove big challenge

NINE teams contested Beacons Challenge '11 at the Outdoor Leadership Training Centre at Talybont in Wales.

Five teams entered as Novices, the difference between them and the Advanced teams being the total amount of distance covered over the two-day event.

The winners of each category were determined by each team's total time mountain walking, open canoeing and mountain biking.

There were time penalties for missed checkpoints and missed items on the memory game during the canoe phase.

Despite a few bumps and bruises along the way all competitors made it to the finish line successfully.

HMS Raleigh Team 2 won the Novices race, followed by Eastern Region PT Office, DCISS, DE&S Commcen and HMS Raleigh Team 1.

BRNC took the Advanced title, followed by 771 NAS, RNLA and 4 FOST SM.

Next year's competition will take place from June 18-20.

Front-line dancers

THE front line in Afghanistan is a demanding environment. And one of the latest demands is for dancers...

CSE Forces Entertainment has an important role to play in the morale of front-line forces, and in May 2009 adapted to the conditions by sending small shows to forward operating bases (FOBs).

The new 'forward format' saw two comedians and a tour manager, complete with a basic sound system that fitted into a small suitcase, performing several tours in extremes of temperature across Afghanistan – including shows in the notorious Sangin district.

The comedy always went down well – but the audiences always asked the same question – “where are the dancers?”

CSE had already foreseen that eventuality, and had sounded out their troupe over who might be up for such a tour.

It was made clear that anyone going forward would have to put up with the most austere of conditions.

It was not just a case of lacking those touches of comfort (such as electricity and running water) – this was all about going to the loo in a plastic bag in a corrugated iron shack, washing your hair in a bowl in a dark commercial container and dancing in 50° Centigrade.

They would need to retain their enthusiasm while being ready to move quickly after only three hours' sleep, and jump in and out of helicopters after tactical landings at the very sharpest end of British military operations in Helmand Province.

Any volunteers? Step forward Charlotte Chapman and Naomi Lynch, who had already toured the main operating bases in Afghanistan and enjoyed



● VIP transport for dancers Charlotte (left) and Naomi as a Royal Marine looks on

performing in regular shows on the big stages in Kabul, Kandahar and Camp Bastion.

Lack of fancy lights, sound system, toilets and so on at FOBs and Patrol Bases did not faze them.

“There were moments of ‘this must be a dream – I couldn’t possibly be witnessing this for real’,” said Naomi.

“But that’s all part of the fun of CSE tours.

“The fact we were far further forward than 80 per cent of the people that go to Afghanistan is a pretty amazing achievement, and to think we got to perform for the boys who literally are faced with dealing with insurgents and risking their lives on a daily basis was overwhelming.”

Charlotte added: “The make-

up running down my face became a good look! We were so well looked after and treated like VIPs everywhere we went.”

The tour was led by seasoned CSE mainstay and ex-REME soldier Ian Nichols, for whom the security of the cast was the main priority, as well as the sound mixing and show production.

Joining them on stage was comedian Barry Castagnola, an old hand at FOBs tours, who has done three of these gruelling trips

over the last two years.

“You never take these things on lightly,” he said.

“You do have moments of ‘what the hell am I doing here’ – telling jokes to a load of blokes who’ve literally just come in from a fire fight...”

“Playing to an armed audience is quite surreal.

“It’s about as full-on as any gig gets, but they are so appreciative and the experiences I’ve had will stay with me forever.”

Scimitar starts boat race

GIBRALTAR patrol boat HMS Scimitar was given the honour of starting an intercontinental boat race.

If that sounds like a gruelling oceanic marathon, then you’d be wrong – it’s a 28 nautical mile sprint across the Strait to North Africa.

But that is not to belittle the Moroccan Boat Race, nor the role of the Gibraltar Squadron and its members.

AB Kurtis Lyth was the man who held aloft a horn on Scimitar to get the race under way.

Craft gathered in the north-western side of the harbour in the shadow of the Rock ready for the dash to be the first into the port of Marina Smir.

That lies on the east coast of Morocco, about ten miles south of the Spanish enclave of Ceuta.

Scimitar, one of two boats which form the core of the Gibraltar Squadron with sister HMS Sabre, broke off briefly from her regular patrol of the British territory’s waters to get racegoers under way.

“It was great to be given the opportunity to fly the flag for Gibraltar Squadron and the Royal Navy,” said AB Lyth, the most junior member of Scimitar’s crew; he’s served with the fast patrol craft for the past ten months.

It’s the task of the squadron, based in modern facilities a short distance from The Tower, to protect Gibraltar’s waters, safeguard visiting RN and Allied naval vessels, and ensure that merchant and pleasure craft can navigate the waters safely.

Wider link for seafarers

JUNE’S *Navy News* featured the new Royal Naval Association ‘virtual branch’, which allows housebound members to keep in touch by holding pre-arranged group ‘meetings’ over the phone.

The virtual branch was set up through Community Network’s Seafarers’ Link, and a similar service exists for all ex-mariners, not just those in the RNA.

Project manager Chris Rankin said that the objective of the fortnightly, free, hour-long

conference calls was to “establish small groups of ex-seafarers, to share their lifetime experiences, and consequently to bond into social units, all from the security of their armchair.”


For many participants, such calls are the social highlight of their lives.

“Another element of the Seafarers Link is collating offered stories, at risk of being lost forever, of personal memories afloat back in the days when British presence


was truly global,” said Chris.

“A volunteer is already writing down some of their wartime Arctic Convoy stories, and these will eventually be linked to the Community Network’s website.

“Therefore, should you know of, or out there, a lonely shipmate, Wren, deep-sea fisherman, lifeboatman or admiral, and would like more information, contact me on 01752 812674 or at chris@community-network.org and we’ll get in touch.”



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Foxtrot 4 memorial is moved

THIS is a monument to four Royal Marines and two sailors – and thanks to the efforts of today’s guardians of the Falklands it now sits close to where they died.

Nearly 30 years after the crew of landing craft Foxtrot 4 were killed, the memorial honouring their sacrifice finally overlooks the spot where the boat went down in Choiseul Sound.

The craft from assault ship HMS Fearless had helped to evacuate the crew of stricken HMS Antelope just days earlier at great cost to itself.

Foxtrot 4’s reprieve was short-lived, however; she was fatally attacked by Argentine aircraft on June 8 1982, killing the six men aboard.

Their memory has been honoured every year, first by Fearless and more recently by HMS Bulwark, which is home today to Foxtrot 4’s parent Royal Marines unit, 4 Assault Squadron; only recently Bulwark held a memorial service in the Channel.

But the owners of Lively Island in the Falklands also paid tribute by erecting a monument.

It was later discovered that the memorial didn’t overlook the place where F4 sank, so after planning permission was granted by the Falklands government, the monument was moved to Bertha’s Beach, which

does overlook the site and is more accessible.

A team from NEFI – Naval Engineering Falkland Islands, the team who provide support to HMS Clyde and visiting RN/RFA vessels – plus RAF personnel offered to help with the relocation.

The 20 engineers, led by CPO ‘Scouse’ Kofoed, gave up their own time to help with the project – which proved to be rather challenging.

“The team worked in 45kt winds on many occasions, working in full foul-weather clothing and ski goggles to protect our eyesight from the sandblast created by the wind,” said CPO Kofoed.

“The beach is ten miles from the depot where a lot of the materials had been stored – transporting the tons of bricks, cement, sand, water bowlers, tools and equipment across extremely inhospitable tracks, roads, beach and wasteland was a project within itself.”

When the Falklands weather became too severe, the engineers hunkered down in an Arctic tent, which struggled to cope with the elements.

Despite the challenges, the memorial was completed in time for a formal dedication by the islands’ military commander, Cdre Philip Thicknesse, in the presence of Conflict veterans.

Bletchley tribute is unveiled

THE Queen has dedicated a new memorial paying tribute to the wartime code-breakers who played a vital role in the Allies' victory.

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh made their first visit to Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire to unveil the memorial, which also notes the work done at various outstations.

The royal party was given a tour of the museum and saw some of the restoration projects to rebuild wartime machines used in the breaking of enemy codes.

These included the Turing Bombe, created by mathematical genius Alan Turing, and Colossus, the ancestor of the modern electronic computer.

The Queen was also shown a German Enigma machine, the capture of which was high on the wartime Royal Navy's list of priorities.

At the dedication ceremony, the Queen met Bletchley Park and outstation veterans, and was introduced to relatives of other notable players, including Sir John Dermot Turing, nephew of Alan Turing.

The Queen spoke of her deep sense of admiration and gratitude for the men and women who served at Bletchley, and the debt the nation owed them for their achievements.

Following the ceremony, the Queen was shown the Roll of Honour, which lists the names of those who worked on codebreaking and signal interception – almost 11,000 names have been collected.

The memorial, designed and sculpted by artist Charles Gurrey, consists of two 8ft high slabs of Caithness stone interlinked at the top, signifying the mutual reliance of those at Bletchley Park and those intercepting enemy transmissions in the outstations.

One block bears the words 'We also served', the other a list of the 300 plus outstations that existed across the world.

Clyde talks look to the future

HIGH-level talks have taken place between the Ministry of Defence and representatives of the local councils that support Clyde Naval Base over the build-up of the future home of the RN Submarine Service.

Naval Base Commander Cdre Mike Wareham led discussions with Sally Loudon, Chief Executive, and Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director Communities, from Argyll and Bute Council, and David MacMillan, Chief Executive, and Elaine Melrose, Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, of West Dunbartonshire Council.

The talks aimed to build on already-established relationships and deliver a joint approach in developing strategies and plans that would effectively support the build-up of HMNB Clyde over the next decade.

The Commodore presented the vision for Clyde to become the home of the UK Submarine Service, with the associated increase in Naval personnel that will entail.

He explained that the Naval Base is currently home to five submarines along with seven minehunters, and that by 2023 the number of submarines baseported at Clyde will have risen to 11.

Common challenges, including funding, education and housing, were discussed, and the Commodore told officials that funding had already been approved for some of the Naval housing in Helensburgh's Colgrain Estate, with upgrading work planned over the next two years.

Regular trilateral meetings will now take place to ensure that the Naval Base and the local communities continue to work closely.



● Yeovilton firefighters undertake the Runway Dash the hard way – pulling their 17-ton fire engine

Picture: PO(Phot) Jannine Hartmann-Burgon

Fire engine towed for runway dash

AS part of a Go Yeovil Week, promoting healthy living and physical fitness, RN Air Station Yeovil staged a Runway Dash for military and civilian personnel and members of the public.

The Dash was down the length of the main runway – over 2,300m, and usually reserved for military and civil aircraft of all sizes.

More than 70 people of all ages, some in fancy dress, took up the challenge and were sent on their way by Cdre Paul Chivers, Commanding Officer of HMS Heron.

The Fire Section decided to put something extra into the run and, under the leadership of PO 'Jesse' James, dragged a 17-ton fire engine the length of the runway, completing the feat in

a remarkable 18 minutes.

Station Executive Officer Cdr Danny Stembridge, who took part in the run, said "The air station was delighted to be part of Go Yeovil, and running down the main runway was a novelty for us.

"We were very pleased with the local response and everyone enjoyed it."

Victory dismasted during restoration

NELSON'S flagship has been 'dismasted' for the first time since the war as HMS Victory undergoes the most comprehensive overhaul since her finest hour.

Her three masts are all being removed as work gets under way on a mammoth restoration project.

Those involved with the Herculean task say it's the biggest

rebuild carried out on the ship of the line – today a living tribute to Nelson and his age, enjoyed by upwards of 400,000 visitors annually – since she was repaired after the battering she took at Trafalgar and the subsequent storm in 1805.

The upper sections of all three masts, the bowsprit, booms, yards and spars, 768 wooden blocks – some of them 100 years old –

and 26 miles of rigging (enough to stretch from Portsmouth to Littlehampton) have been carefully removed by experts, catalogued and documented, assisting future restorers of Victory when she needs work doing again.

The last time the legendary ship was minus her masts was 1944.

Victory is still a serving RN vessel, as she is the flagship of the Second Sea Lord, has a

Royal Navy ship's company and frequently hosts official events from ceremonies to dinners.

A ten-year restoration programme is planned, with an interactive exhibition soon opening in the neighbouring National Museum of the Royal Navy showing how Victory was built in Chatham 250 years ago, and how she has been cared for as one of the nation's most treasured historical icons.

"Preserving a wooden warship is a battle – a battle against nature and just as epic, in its way, as the Battle of Trafalgar," said Prof Dominic Tweddle, Director General of National Museum of the Royal Navy.

"To be able to witness how that battle is fought will be a big draw for visitors.

"Both Victory and the museum will remain open to the public throughout the restoration work."

Most of the highly-skilled restoration work will be carried out by master shipwrights and other specialists from BAE Systems, who are also currently working on the new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth in Portsmouth.

As well as possessing the cutting-edge skills required to build the 65,000-tonne leviathan, the workers also maintain traditional skills required to look after Nelson's flagship.

They hope to re-use as many wooden blocks in the rigging as possible during the restoration, or if it not recycle them.

The work on Victory coincides with a special summer deal for people looking to sample the naval history in Portsmouth Harbour.

Until September 4 visitors to the historic dockyard can also tour the RN Submarine Museum and Explosion, the museum of Naval firepower, for an extra £2 – and the waterbus will carry you there.

The 'big ticket' (£23.50 for adults, £20.35 for senior citizens and students, £17.80 for children or £64.15 for a family) entitles people to see all the historic dockyard has to offer – Victory, Warrior, the National Museum of the Royal Navy, Action Stations, Trafalgar sail, Mary Rose Museum (the Tudor warship herself is off-limits as a new hall is being built around her) and a harbour tour.

A continuous waterbus service will run every hour from 10.30am until 4.30pm, beginning at the dockyard, then on to Explosion, the Submarine Museum and Gunwharf Quays, before returning to the naval base.

See www.historicdockyard.co.uk/bigticket



● International Officer Cadets from BRNC clear litter from Brixham Harbour

Picture: OC Andrew Osborne

International assistance

ENGLISH language training is provided at Britannia Royal Naval College for young officers from many countries around the world prior to preparing them for further military training either at BRNC, Sandhurst or with the Royal Marines at the Commando Training Centre, Lympstone.

As part of their training this term, Anson and Marlborough divisions have been encouraged to become involved with an outreach project in the community.

CPO Bill Amery, who works in support of the International Officers during their time in BRNC, said: "Involvement with an outreach project gives some practical development of team working, it raises an awareness of the Royal Navy commitment to local community relations and provides some opportunity for interaction with the wider community."

The first activity took the team to Kitson Park in Torquay, close to

Torbay hospital and used by both hospital visitors and local families.

They set to work to clear a stream of rubbish and debris, prepared ground for a natural meadow area and painted gates and railings.

"It was really great that local people stopped and chatted to the cadets," said Bill.

"I was very impressed with how hard the young officers worked during the day, and they were obviously pleased to see the improvements they made."

Following on from that success CPO Amery took the next group to Brixham to assist in the clearing of flotsam and litter in the harbour area.

"With a little bit of quick thinking the young officers were able to take advantage of the high tide releasing the litter from the rocks," he said.

"They cleared the length of the harbour breakwater and then as the tide receded they carried out a

litter skirmish to collect anything missed.

"They worked extremely hard." During their time working along the breakwater the team were alerted by a group of children to an accident involving a teenager who had banged his head badly and required first aid and CPR as the emergency services were called.

"I was very proud of how the International Officers conducted themselves," said CPO Amery.

"They were a credit to their countries and to BRNC." Cdr Andy Hancock, Commander BRNC, said: "The Royal Naval College has supported the local community since 1863.

"All Officer Cadets get involved in some form of Outreach activity and this particular project in Torbay allowed the International Divisions to demonstrate their leadership skills and enthusiasm in a variety of ways while interacting with the public."

Frigate gears up for trials

HMS KENT has passed the half-way point of a £24m upgrade and refit package being carried out at Rosyth on the Forth in Scotland.

Working alongside Babcock Marine Ltd and Clyde Directorate (Rosyth), the ship's company – which is now approaching full strength at 150 – has developed a strong partnering ethos which are a vital element of supporting a warship in upkeep.

The strength of the partnership is demonstrated by various out-of-work activities – though that doesn't preclude a degree of cutthroat competition; the Royal Navy emerged as clear winners in both bowling competitions and go-karting...

An outreach project was also arranged by Deputy Weapon Engineer Officer Lt Paul Kempley which saw personnel from the Type 23 frigate, BML and Pyroy Ltd (a BML contractor) maintain Camdean Primary School's ornamental garden.

Kent's sailors have seen numerous changes at Rosyth since the ship arrived last November.

Firstly, near-neighbour HMS Illustrious sailed in July after a year-long refit in the same yard.

HMS Shoreham has since entered an upkeep period and the massive Goliath crane was delivered from China and assembled over the dry dock where the first of the Navy's new aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth, will be assembled from the various blocks being built at yards around the UK.

Less tangible, but just as notable, was the change of HMS Caledonia to MOD Caledonia in April under the newly-configured Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

The rest of the ship's company is expected to move back on board Kent early next month, just days after the new Commanding Officer, Cdr Ben Ripley, takes over.

The Senior Naval Officer (SNO) during the frigate's refit, Lt Cdr Matt Kent, said he has enjoyed the varied and rewarding challenge as top man but is very much looking forward to returning to his regular 'day job' as Marine Engineer Officer.

Minds are now turning to another significant date – 11/11/11, which is Kent's designated Ready for Sea Date, when the focus then falls on marine and weapon engineering sea trials, in particular setting to work and proving the propulsion systems, the upgraded Sea Wolf missile system, the main 4.5in MOD 1 gun, the updated Command System and Sonar 2087.

Current indications are that the frigate's projected Fleet Date – mid-February next year – will be met and all work done within budget.

St Dunstaners visit Sultan

HMS SULTAN will host the annual St Dunstan's Blind Ex-Servicemen's summer camp at the beginning of this month – an arrangement the Gosport engineering base has fulfilled since the closure of HMS Daedalus in 1996.

Around 25 campers, with roughly the same number of helpers, will be based at Sultan, undertaking a range of activities including sailing from the Gosport Sailing Centre, gliding from Daedalus, archery, a sports day, museum visits, golf, canoeing, fishing and motorcycling, and a quiz night has also been organised.

Shetland visit

AS *Navy News* went to press fishery protection ship HMS Mersey was due in Shetland to support the Tall Ships Race.

The four-day visit to Lerwick will give visitors a chance to look round the patrol vessel before she acts as saluting platform for the Parade of Sail at the start of the latest leg of the race – weather permitting...

Memorials will be protected

WAR memorials across the UK will be sprayed with an invisible dye in a bid to stop thieves selling plaques for scrap.

In response to the growing crime of raiding memorials for their valuable metal, chiefly bronze and copper, an ambitious scheme has begun to mark all monuments and cenotaphs with 'SmartWater' – invisible to the naked eye and virtually impossible for thieves to remove.

The charity, which records and attempts to conserve the 100,000 war memorials across Britain, believes at least one monument a week is targeted by thieves.

With the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Great War looming in 2014, the War Memorials Trust and SmartWater Foundation hope to protect the cenotaphs by marking them.

The initiative does not cover the three national naval memorials – the imposing cenotaphs designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens which pay homage to fallen sailors in Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham – which are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

In addition to those national monuments, cities, towns and villages raised money to honour their local dead.

It is those memorials the 'In Memorial 2014' initiative seeks to protect, for just as thieves have been stripping church roofs and telecommunications cables, memorial panels have become targets for criminals.

The authorities reckon the criminal trade in metals in the UK is worth around £700m a year.

Once applied to the memorials, SmartWater cannot be washed, burned or sandblasted off, but it can leave traces on the clothes or tools thieves might use.

The marking shows up under ultraviolet light – and police can use it as prosecution evidence.

Covenant is signed

SAILORS and Royal Marines ensured the Naval Service was represented when civic leaders in North Yorkshire joined forces to sign an 'Armed Forces Covenant'.

Cllr John Fort, Chairman of North Yorkshire County Council, said that the people of the county owed a huge debt of gratitude to members of the Armed Forces who were prepared to put their lives at risk for the security of the country.

Cllr Fort said that the military presence in the county was significant – more than 15,000 men and women, the majority of them Army.

The Chairman of Richmondshire District Council, Cllr Jill McMullon, said she was immensely proud of her authority's connection to the Armed Forces.

The signing of the covenant, believed to be the first to be formally recognised at a local level, was carried out at Catterick Garrison.

Tyne is in Scotland...

FOG on the Tyne – HMS Tyne that is, because the fog is actually shrouding the Scottish highlands.

Fresh from three weeks of operational sea training, sailors from the fishery protection ship headed into the mountains for some adventurous training.

The crew rotation system used by the Portsmouth-based vessel meant two thirds of Tyne's ship's company could take advantage of the outdoor activities.

Blue Watch used the Joint Services facilities at Rothiemurchus Lodge, near Aviemore, to go kayaking, sailing, mountain biking and hill walking in the Cairngorms.

Red Watch ventured even further afield to Wester Ross in the north-west Highlands where, based from a hostel at the foot of An Teallach, they headed off on numerous coastal and hill walks.



● Royal Navy personnel march in the London Pride parade

Naval contingent take pride of place

MORE than two dozen members of the Naval Service took part in the 40th London Pride parade in London.

Sailors marched at the head of an Armed Forces contingent featuring some 80 Servicemen and women from all three Services.

Before the group set out, an email from the Prime Minister was read out by Lt Cdr Mandy McBain, Chair of the Naval Service Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Forum, in which David Cameron said: "Your presence in the Pride Parade sends a very strong and clear signal about the type of society we are – where everyone's contribution is respected and valued regardless of sexual orientation."

"I am delighted that this is the largest uniformed contingent ever at Pride."

Senior officers from all three Services and the Civil Service were joined by the Home Secretary, Theresa May, to further endorse the military attendance at Pride.

Cdre Rupert Wallace, the Naval Service LGBT Advocate, spoke to the Royal Navy contingent and said how their visible demonstration of the pride they had in their Service sent a strong message to the watching crowds.

He then talked informally to the 29 Navy, who were a mix of officers, senior rates and junior

rates, before they set off on the march through London, which ended with the military paying their respects at the Cenotaph.

The Armed Forces, which was the largest ever uniformed contingent marching at Pride, received the biggest cheers from the estimated 500,000-strong crowd along the two-mile route.

Cdre Wallace, who is Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla, is one of six Diversity Advocates appointed by Naval Secretary Rear Admiral David Steel.

Also covering the LGBT plot is WO1 Vic Parsons; race and ethnicity is the responsibility of Capt Mark Windsor (Captain Sea Cadets) and WO1 Colin Thomas (DNLS SHRC WO), while gender is the field of Cdre John Keegan (Commodore Maritime Reserves) and WO Bill Beaumont (Executive WO, HMS Montrose).

The initiative further demonstrates the Navy's commitment to advancing equality of opportunity as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on April 6.

Diversity Advocates are recognised as playing a central role in demonstrating senior leadership, disseminating good practice and encouraging the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion within the Naval Service.

■ The 2012 Stonewall Staff

Survey is now open for Naval Service personnel to complete, allowing them to express views about acceptance, current communications, role models and overall policy awareness within the Service.

Stonewall are placing additional emphasis on this survey during this year's Workplace Equality Index (WEI) Benchmarking process.

The Naval Service made

much progress during last year's WEI and in order to maintain this advancement and to further the development of LGBT engagement it is important that the survey is completed by as many RN and RM personnel as possible.

See http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work/wei_survey/; the organisation name is ROYAL NAVY, and the Staff code number is 601.

Buddhists gather

BUDDHISTS from across the Armed Forces who gathered at Amport House for a conference also took the opportunity to celebrate.

The Buddhist Conference and Spiritual Leadership Course at the Forces' pastoral headquarters saw the 50 attendees mark the 2,600th Sambuddha Jayanthi, which is the Anniversary of the Enlightenment of the Buddha – a festival celebrated worldwide to commemorate the message of goodwill, tolerance and peace proclaimed in Buddhism.

Delegates were welcomed by Dr Sunil Kariyakarawana, the Buddhist Chaplain to the Military, after which the conference started with inaugural chanting led by the Most Ven Seelawimala Maha Thera, Head of London Buddhist Vihara.

All three Services were represented both by attendees and by Rear Admiral David Steel, Chief of Staff (Personnel), Maj Gen Gerry Berragan, the Army's Director General Personnel, and Gp Capt Lorraine Pemberton, the RAF's Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff Personnel Policy.

In his address, Adm Steel (pictured right) said it was an honour to be invited and how he wholeheartedly supported any opportunity for personal development and in particular for those who share a faith to get together and consider the importance of their beliefs and how they apply in their daily working lives.

During the three-day conference, attendees took part in panel discussions about mindfulness at work, talks about the seven powerful factors of enlightenment and discussions on developing a daily practice.

For more information about Buddhism in the Armed Forces contact Dr Sunil Kariyakarawana at Sunilkari59@gmail.com or the Armed Forces Buddhist Chairman, Lt Richie Moss, at richard.moss922@mod.uk

Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies

Celebrate 50 years of hovercraft

DID you serve in the Interservice Hovercraft Unit, the Interservice Hovercraft (Trials) Unit, the Naval Hovercraft (Trials) Unit, 200 Hovercraft Squadron RCT, the Far East detachment, or are currently serving in 539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines?

If so, you are invited to attend an event to commemorate 50 years of UK military hovercraft involvement.

Military interest in hovercraft was facilitated by Earl Mountbatten, who recognised the potential of this new concept in amphibious warfare.

This interest resulted in the formation of the Interservice Hovercraft Trials Unit, in September 1961, at HMS Daedalus, Lee-on-the-Solent.

September 2011 sees the 50th anniversary of this event and is to be commemorated by Seahorse 50, to be held at Browdown, Gosport, over the weekend of September 9-12.

The programme will consist of a setup and rehearsal day (September 9), with schools, colleges and cadet forces visiting, a formal opening followed by an assault involving conventional landing craft, hovercraft and helicopters on Sept 10 for military personnel.

The hangar at Browdown will be used for static displays and presentations on military hovercraft activity.

Public day will be on Sept 11, with the following day used to pack up.

As well as commemorating the 50th anniversary, Seahorse 50 will provide a shop window to illustrate UK defence capabilities, a chance to recruit future military personnel and has the potential to raise funds for military charities.

Schools, colleges and youth organisations are invited to attend on the Friday and military and ex-military personnel on the Saturday, by contacting the Secretary of Seahorse 50, Brian J Russell, 24 Jellicoe Avenue, Alverstoke, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 2PE, telephone 023 9258 4371, or e-mail Brianatjellicoe@aol.com



Nation stages a day to remember

EDINBURGH may have been at the heart of the best-supported Armed Forces Day to date, but there was an echo to be heard in every corner of the land and quite a few places overseas as well.

Type 23 frigate HMS Portland was the main RN contribution to events in the Scottish capital, berthing close to the former Royal Yacht Britannia at Leith and welcoming more than 5,000 visitors on board.

The ship put on a simulated counter-piracy operation, and her Lynx featured in a display of military hardware in Holyrood Park, where the flight crew met Prime Minister David Cameron.

Edinburgh City Council hosted a reception on the frigate's flight deck for members of the Scottish Parliament and Armed Forces personnel, ending with *Beat Reterat* by the Royal Marines Band Scotland.

One of the main events in Edinburgh was a parade along the Royal Mile by up to 2,500 Service personnel, veterans and cadets, and it is thought that 100,000 people attended the various AFD events over three days – events that included displays by the Royal Marines Commandos and RN field gunners.

Another Type 23 took centre stage at the other end of Britain when HMS Montrose fired a 17-gun salute off Plymouth Hoe during a ceremonial sail-past.

A ten hour-programme opened with a service of remembrance and thanksgiving, which saw the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, Eric Dancer, present the Elizabeth



Cross to the families of personnel killed serving their nation.

Thereafter, the emphasis was fun and spectacle, including a Dakota D3 from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight staging a flypast – all something of a trial run for AFD 2012, when Plymouth will host the national event.

A third frigate played her part this year, despite the fact she was thousands of miles from home; HMS St Albans was on a break in Muscat when she flew the AFD flag – and received a morale-boosting delivery of welfare parcels at the same time.

Portsmouth saw destroyers old (HMS Gloucester) and new (HMS Daring) feature in the city's AFD programme by opening for visitors, while a 1940s-style street party was staged in the Victory Arena.

RN Air Station Culdrose used the day as an opportunity to inform the public about the role of the station, and the Royal Navy, in the wider world.

But it wasn't just the traditional garrisons and Naval ports which celebrated the work of Britain's Servicemen and women past, present and future.

Towns like Whitehaven and

Bedford pulled out the stops with parades and displays; in Whitehaven's case the RN was represented by P2000 patrol boat HMS Charger, whose ship's company joined colleagues from submarine HMS Ambush – in build in Barrow – for a parade celebrating the Freedom of the Borough of Copeland.

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire also had a full programme of events to mark the day, including a service of thanksgiving.

And while it was pretty much business as usual in operational theatres such as Afghanistan, the day gave Service personnel a chance to reflect on the popular support they enjoy from the British public.

● *The Red Arrows, as seen from the flight deck of HMS Portland in Leith, during an evening reception for VIPs*

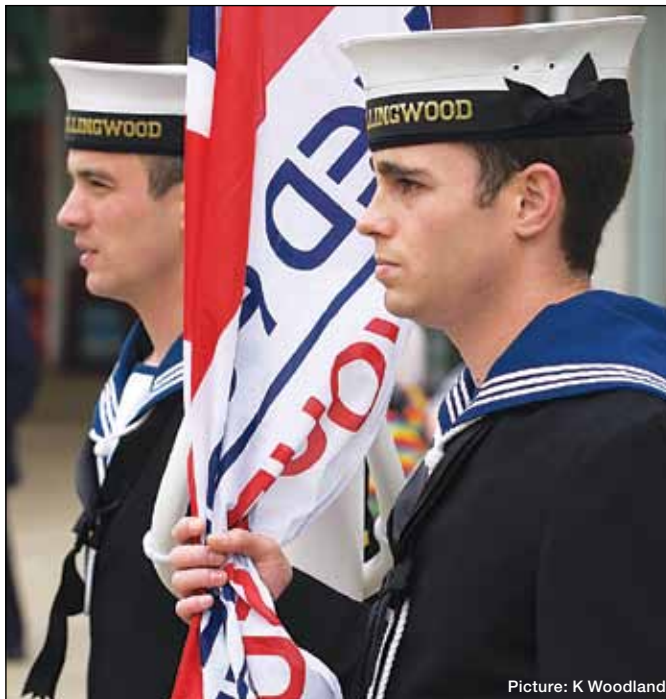


Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd



Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson

● *LStd Aaron Dickson, of HMS St Albans, with one of the welfare boxes received by the ship as part of the Armed Forces Day initiative. The frigate was on a break in Muscat during her deployment East of Suez; (left) Sailors from HMS Collingwood help raise the AFD flag in Fareham; (right) HMS Portland alongside in Leith for AFD; (below right) Officers, ratings and Other Ranks represent the Senior Service during the main AFD parade in Edinburgh – picture by Mark Owens (MOD)*



Picture: K Woodland



● *Veterans organisations, including the RNA, parade their standards on the Hoe in Plymouth*

Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow





'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Heroes cruise the Thames

THE Association of Dunkirk Little Ships veterans cruise will take place on the River Thames on Sunday September 4, and is open to all veterans of the Dunkirk operation and the D-Day Landings.

The ships will leave the Thames Motor Yacht Club at Hampton Court at 1000, arriving at Weybridge Mariners Club for lunch and entertainment at 1230.

The return leg, by river or in vintage cars, sets off at 1600.

Any veterans who wish to take part should contact event organiser Ian Gilbert on papillon1930@yahoo.com, or WO1 Mick Gentry on 01582 726115, mobile 07977 982110.

Anyone wishing to wave them on their way can see them transit East Molesey Lock at around 1020 and Sunbury Lock at 1120.

An additional cruise will be held this year for more recent veterans.

On Saturday September 3 personnel from Afghanistan who are currently undergoing rehabilitation at Headley Court Hospital in Epsom will make the shorter return trip to Richmond Lock.

This cruise will also leave the Thames Motor Yacht Club at 1400, transiting Richmond Lock at 1500 and heading back at 1600 to reach their starting point at 1730.

Organisers would like to see as many spectators along the banks of the river as possible to cheer the lads along.

Wetherby cash

WETHERBY branch held their Alexandra Rose Day collection in the town – and raised £618.10 to be shared between Alexandra Rose charities, SSAFA Forces Help, the RNBT and Wetherby RNA.

Branch PRO S/M Fred Wake said: "We are most grateful to the people of Wetherby for their generosity."

"Despite the current economic situation, they have answered the call and supported us."

"Thanks also to Wm Morrison's for hosting our collection in-store, and the Horsefair Centre."



● The Rev Robert Amos is presented with his Honorary Member certificate by Driffield branch president Lt Cdr Phil Dutton RN (ret'd); also pictured are chairman S/M Ron Dibble (left) and secretary S/M Pat Ramsey

Padre's Naval links

DRIFFIELD branch's sin bosun knows a thing or two about the Royal Navy.

The Rev Robert Amos, who has been awarded honorary membership of the branch, has a daughter in the Mob; she is currently serving ashore in Afghanistan and her husband is in HMS Illustrious.

During the past five years the

Invincible lives on in veterans' gathering

THIRTY years on – that was the significant milestone marked by a large gathering of members of the HMS Invincible Reunion Club, the first commission wardroom association, at a lunch in the august surroundings of the Army & Navy Club on London's Pall Mall, writes Nick Childs.

The association is one of the most dedicated and enduring of its kind, if not unique, with three decades now of annual gatherings.

Although most of Invincible's first generation of officers have long since left the service, and are scattered far and wide, some 36 got together for this auspicious 30th anniversary reunion.

Invincible also attracted some illustrious commanding officers over the years.

One of those, the current CINC Fleet, Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, was guest of honour at the lunch.

And, to mark this particular occasion, association secretary Richard Pelly (a young engineer lieutenant in Invincible back when she was brand new) sent a special loyal greeting to the Queen on behalf of those gathered.

In return, the Queen, who launched Invincible in May 1977 and then attended her commissioning in July 1980, replied with her warm thanks and best wishes.

In her day, Invincible was a new type of carrier with new challenges; there were vivid recollection of that at the reunion, and also some sad reflections on absent friends – including the ship herself.

This was the first reunion when Invincible was no longer around, and several of those gathered at the Army & Navy Club had seen the sad images of the ship in the press, recently broken up and in



● 36 officers of the Invincible Reunion Club gathered for their 30th anniversary lunch at the Army & Navy Club. In the front row, CINC Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar is flanked on the right by Peter Ridley, the first officer to join Invincible, and on the left by Dermot Rhodes, Invincible's commander in her early service, Mike Price, and George Mason

bits in a breakers yard in Turkey.

But Admiral Soar, in his speech, highlighted the human side of the story.

These annual Invincible reunions, he said, were evidence of the strength of the ties that had bound this group together.

"Close-knit wardrooms, such as yours, are good indications of where we will find our most

successful ships," he said.

If the new carriers generate the same esprit de corps, he added, "I predict great things for the ships that will continue your proud legacy."

The most stalwart members of this reunion club, on 27 attendances each, are club treasurer Malcolm Fuller, originally an air controller, Tony

Hallett (deputy supply officer) and Peter Ridley, the first officer to join Invincible in build and who was this year awarded the club's Invincible Trophy.

But the final toast, from Admiral Soar, was to "HMS Invincible".

(Nick Childs is a BBC world affairs correspondent, and author of "The Age of Invincible", published by Pen & Sword.)

The Bourne legacy

A WARTIME ship which carried the pride of Bourne with her has been commemorated in the naming of two streets in the Lincolnshire town.

Bourne branch held a formal 'naming ceremony' to recognise the significance of Warship Week

in February 1942, when the town aimed to raise £35,000 to adopt the trawler HMS Beryl. The townspeople actually raised more than £54,000.

Beryl was adapted for minesweeping and anti-submarine work, and sailed for

Malta where she did exemplary work throughout the siege of the Mediterranean stronghold.

Sellwood, later a lieutenant commander, won the Distinguished Service Cross, and 15 of Beryl's ship's company were decorated for their bravery.

As an outstanding element of Bourne's history, the ship and her wartime CO have been immortalised in Beryl Mews and Sellwood Terrace.

Bourne branch is indebted to a number of people and organisations for help in putting the event together, including The Local, Fovia, Paul Wand, Bourne Civic Society, S/M Bert Johns and Larkfleet Homes, as well as numerous other individuals.

Nautical farm hands

A BOOK review in April's edition headlined 'How the Atlantic Was Won' sparked a memory in an anonymous reader, who sent us a cutting from an American newspaper from 1943.

Our correspondent explained that his four-funnel ex-US Navy destroyer had to put into Norfolk, Virginia, for repairs.

"Estimated time, two to three weeks' work," he said.

"Consequently they couldn't have British naval personnel having things easy, so what happened is described in the

newspaper cutting."

The cutting tells of 44 British seamen spending their first leave in the United States helping Maryland farmers with their crops.

The majority of the group of stokers, signalmen and seamen were city dwellers, eager to be in the country, and the paper reported that "they consider helping the farmers a rare treat."

After arriving at Baltimore by ferry, 31 of the men went to Howard County, the rest to Phoenix and Pikesville.

Jack laid to rest in style

A VETERAN member of Netley and District branch was laid to rest in a style which befitted his standing in the community.

Residents of Hedge End in Hampshire turned out in force to witness the ceremonial funeral of S/M Jack Denyer, who died at the age of 91 just three days after attending the branch's 17th anniversary dinner, where he had enthralled shipmates with his usual banter and good humour.

Greatly admired by the branch and wider community, Jack's cortege featured a horse-drawn hearse and paraded through the streets of the village, led by the pipers of St Andrew's Pipe Band of Hamble-le-Rice and accompanied by the standards of the Association and the Royal British Legion Netley.

The hearse was flanked by a marching guard of honour from Netley branch, while the procession was met by a further guard at the church, which was filled to overflowing.

Branch chairman S/M Brian Sandom delivered the eulogy, and the formal proceedings were followed by a wake at the RBL Club in Netley.

Jack's passing leaves the branch with three active members in their 90s, including 95-year-old S/M Bill Adams, who served in HMS Hood in 1940 and is now the oldest member of the HMS Hood Association.

Margate hit the road

MOST folk regard roads as being means of getting somewhere, but Margate branch recently made a visit to a road.

Well, it's not quite a finished road yet, but when opened the £56 million East Kent access road will be the final dual-carriageway link between the M2/A2 and Ramsgate port.

The new road will also provide easy access to Kent International Airport, the former RAF Manston.

It was from here, on February 12 1942, that 18 members of 825 Naval Air Squadron took off in six Swordfish torpedo bombers for Operation Fuller, to try to prevent the so-called 'Channel Dash' by German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen returning home.

All six aircraft were destroyed within 20 minutes of leaving Manston; five men survived.

The road project involves building a bridge over and tunnel under the main rail line to Canterbury, and Margate branch secretary S/M Mick Cox said it had opened their eyes to the world of civil engineering – and was vastly different to what members had done in the Andrew.

He added that members looked forward to seeing the artifacts recovered from the site on display soon, as many Anglo-Saxon graves and treasures had been uncovered during archaeological digs.

Fisgard date in Pompey

AN ASSOCIATION representing former Royal Navy Artificer Apprentices will be marking its 15th anniversary with a gala ball at the Guildhall in Portsmouth next month.

The Fisgard Association Green and White Banquet and Ball, on Saturday September 3, will also see visits laid on to historic ships and a behind-the-scenes look at the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

Although the traditional training of Artificer Apprentices has become part of the Navy's heritage, supplanted by modular technician courses, artificers are still found in the RN – the last course passed out of HMS Sultan a year ago.

For more details of the ball see www.fisgardassociation.org

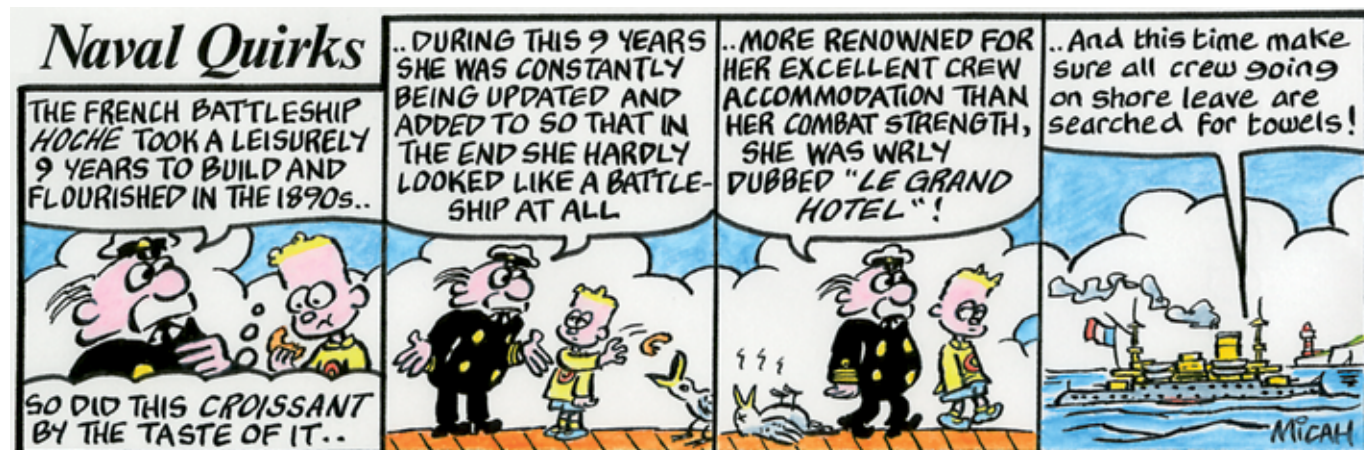
Wildfire III parade arranged

QUEENBOROUGH and District Naval Ensign Association will, on behalf of the Royal Naval Patrol Service, be hosting the annual Wildfire III memorial parade and service in Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent on September 11.

The parade will muster outside Trinity Church, High Street, Queenborough at 1300 with march-off at 1330.

The service will be in Queenborough Park at 1400, with a reception to follow at Queenborough Social Club; parking is available next to the club.

For details contact Janet Flew at janet.flew@btinternet.com, telephone 01795 663784 or write to Janet Flew, 11 Chalk Road, Queenborough, Kent ME11 5AJ.





Groups join forces

THE HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association celebrated its 32nd reunion weekend at South Downs Holiday Village in Bracklesham Bay.

Almost 130 members and guests enjoyed pleasant weather, good food and entertainment – and particularly good company.

Because by coincidence, the Italy Star Association (1943-45) were at the same venue for their annual bash, and the merging of the forces worked a treat.

Planned well in advance, the BAC personnel attended the annual reunion service and parade of the Italy Star Association in Chichester Cathedral, with their president, Vice Admiral Sir Patrick Symons, reading the first lesson. Wreaths were also laid.

A joint march through the city followed.

The BAC Association plans to meet up again at the Hilton Hotel in Blackpool in May 2012.

Third title for Steve

NINE competitors – two from out of the area – entered the Area 2 standard bearers competition, held in the gym of the Royal School of Military Engineering, Brompton, and Gillingham.

The area winner was S/M Steve Susans, of Bromley, taking his third consecutive title.

Runner-up was S/M Colin Rickard, of Paddock Wood.

The Open competition was also won by S/M Susans, with S/M Dave Corringham (Bletchley, Area 6) as runner-up. The other 'outsider' was S/M Peter Coleman, representing Aldershot (Area 3).

The novice trophy was won by S/M Kevin Diplock (Maidstone), an associate member who had only started marching some six weeks before the competition.

Bridgend honours town's submarine

HMS URGE was the scourge of the Italian Navy but beloved by the folk of Bridgend in South Wales.

The people of Bridgend raised £300,000 in Warship Week of 1941 which went towards the Vickers Armstrong-built U-class boat which had been commissioned the previous December.

Urge, under Lt Cdr Edward Tomkinson, proved a real handful in and around the Mediterranean.

She attacked numerous ships and claimed some notable kills and near-misses, including the sinking of a 10,000-ton Italian tanker in the Bay of Biscay and an Italian light cruiser off Stromboli, and causing damage to an Italian battleship and a troopship.

She was lost at the end of April 1942, and the authoritative uboat.net website asserts that she was sunk when an Italian aircraft dive-bombed her.



She went down with all hands, including ten passengers and noted war correspondent Bernard Gray.

The Welsh branch of the

Submariners Association knew of the link between the town and the boat, but in the past few months some detective work has come up trumps.

S/M Glyn Bevan, by chance, discovered the ship's badge lying forgotten in the corner of the local library, and restored it to its former glory (see left).

He also researched local papers from 1941, and his findings about the town's sponsorship of HMS Urge prompted the submariners to organise a service of dedication for the doomed crew and boat.

The local council helped with a venue, and relatives of crew members were contacted, including the daughter and grandson of Lt Cdr Tomkinson, who lived in Suffolk, and the nephew of S/Lt Lloyd, who died during a clandestine landing.

All three attended the service, along with civic leaders – including

the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, who represents the town at the Welsh Assembly – although the daughter of Bernard Gray could not attend through ill health.

The service was conducted by the Rev Len Grabham, and two immaculately turned out Sea Cadets from Porthcawl unit, plus an officer, also participated.

The service was covered by BBC Wales and transmitted later that day.

"After a very successful and sympathetic service, we all repaired to the local United Services club for a wonderful buffet and a convivial drink," said S/M Roy James, secretary of the Submariners Association branch.

"That is where the icing was added to the cake, when Mrs Dickinson, the daughter of the captain, said: 'We now have closure, after 69 years'."

Civic room named for Ark Royal

THREE members of the Yorkshire branch of the Fleet Air Arm Association and several shipmates from Leeds branch of the RNA attended the renaming of the 'Blue Room' in Leeds Civic Hall to the 'Ark Royal Room'.

The unveiling of the ship's bell was performed by the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Dr Ingrid Roscoe, accompanied by the outgoing Lord Mayor of the city, Cllr Jim McKenna, and Lady Mayoress Cllr Andrea McKenna.

The room was named to reflect the close links between the city and the decommissioned aircraft carrier, and follows the Freedom of the City parade earlier this year when the Yorkshire branch gained a new member – a 90-year-old ex-crew member of the wartime "Mighty Ark", CPO Fred Jackson.

Also attending the ceremony was Yorkshire branch secretary S/M Albert Firth, who celebrated his 88th birthday on the same day.

Appeal over Mahratta

KIERON Hoare and his wife Ceri recently returned home to South Wales after visiting the West Country, where they placed a wreath at the Naval Memorial in Plymouth in honour of Ceri's grandfather and his shipmates.

David Lewis Morgan was a Stoker Second Class on board destroyer HMS Mahratta when she was torpedoed and sunk in February 1944 off north Norway while on Arctic Convoy duty – only 16 of her crew of 236 survived.

Kieron has built a website about the ship and her crew, including many photographs, but he would like any more families of crew members – of which he believes there are many in Devon and Cornwall – to get in touch with him to further develop the site.

You can email Kieron at hoare63@yahoo.co.uk, putting HMS Mahratta in the subject box.

Mayor thanks participants

STANDARD bearers lined up outside St Peter's Church in Old Woking as they waited for the Mayor of Woking to arrive.

The occasion was Woking branch's St George's Day parade and service at which the Mayor, Cllr Mohammed Iqbal, read the first lesson and the Bisley Ladies Choir led the singing.

The service was conducted by the branch's honorary padre, the Rev Barry Grimster.

After the parade the Mayor inspected the parade of standards and thanked each standard bearer for attending.

All then joined the civic guests for refreshments in the Church Centre.

Pom-pom shell case mystery

S/M TONY Davie, a member of Woking branch and RMA Reading branch, recently bought a pom-pom shell case on eBay, which is inscribed with the following: *Royal Marines Pom. Pom. Malta 1942.*

Beneath this inscription is the Maltese Cross and the following names: Sgt Darwood, Cpl Grimes, Mnes Siddall, Newington, Foskett, Freeman, Fitch, Warner, Hebbes and Bacon, HMS St Angelo.

The shell case was manufactured in 1934.

S/M Davie would like to know the story behind the object, and is hoping readers of *Navy News* might be able to help.

If you can help, contact S/M Davie at ajdavie@btinternet.com

Trudy wins highest accolade



THE National Chairman of the RNA, S/M Chris Dovey, made a special visit to a Pershore and District branch meeting to present secretary S/M Trudy Borge with an official Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of her outstanding support.

Trudy has been involved with the RNA since the branch's inaugural meeting in September 2002 which she and her father, S/M Ted Annis, organised.

● S/M Trudy Borge with Area 8 chairman S/M Ken Holloway (left) and RNA national chairman S/M Chris Dovey

During that time, she has been their PRO as well as secretary.

The certificate is the highest accolade for an associate member and in presenting it, S/M Dovey stated that it was not only for all the hard work that Trudy has done in organising the construction and opening of the Pershore Commemorative Garden, but also for all the other work she has done on behalf of the RNA.

Trudy said: "Everything I've done has been for my Dad, this Branch and for our local community. I'm proud to be a part of the RNA."

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our June edition (right) was Type 21 frigate HMS Alacrity, which went on to serve in Pakistan as PNS Badr.

And Mr D Glassett, of Hailsham in East Sussex, won our £50 prize for identifying her correctly.

This month's mystery ship (pictured above) served in World War 1, having been launched at a shipyard on the Isle of Wight in May 1913.

Part of what was originally planned as the Florizel-class, with a mixed bag of names (including a sub-set of two 'Rob Roys'), this ship was ordered as Redgauntlet but took her eventual name when the nomenclature was regularised, every ship taking a name beginning with the letter L.

She and three of her 19 sisters (two more joined as part of the emergency war programme) took part in the Battle of Jutland.

Our ship, which displaced less than 1,000 tons, survived the war, and despite the fact she was only eight years old she and more than a dozen of her sisters were sold for



scrapping in 1921.

What was her name?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is September 12 2011. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our October edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 198

Name

Address

My answer

Gloucester bids adieu to destroyer

WITH the decommissioning of HMS Gloucester taking place at the end of June, the right as Freemen was exercised in a march through the city of Gloucester, and the charter was returned to the Mayor of Gloucester during a service in the city's cathedral after the parade.

A civic reception was held for the ship's company, and afterwards the Gloucester branch entertained the officers and ratings of the destroyer at the RNA Club.

On the following day an open day was held by Cdr David George, the Commanding Officer of the ship, while it was alongside in Avonmouth.

A group of 20 shipmates took the chance to visit her there, and reported that they were royally entertained by the ship's company.

"I have since received a charming letter from Cdr George thanking us for our hospitality over the years to successive ship's companies of HMS Gloucester," said branch liaison officer S/M Terry Brain.

"The ship has always been our pride and joy at Gloucester RNA, and will be sorely missed by us all."

New patron

THE recently-formed HMS Brazen Association has announced that a former member of the ship's company has agreed to act as the group's patron.

The Duke of York served in the frigate between 1984 and 1986, when, as part of 815 Naval Air Squadron, he was the ship's Lynx pilot.

See www.hms-brazen.org.uk



Picture: S/M Nigel Huxtable

● National Standard Bearer S/M Bob Coburn (City of Inverness) prepares to lead the RNA contingent in the parade during Armed Forces Day in Edinburgh. Shipmates around the country marked the day by arranging or participating in parades and ceremonies, whether it be Hanworth raising the special flag, Skipton's parade (held a week early so as not to clash with a long-established local game show) or Area 3 using the new marketing material to pull in new members along the South Coast at various AFD events

Change is certain

AS A result of the Strategic Defence and Security Review conducted last autumn, the size of the Navy will be reduced to 30,000 between now and 2015.

Such a large reduction in strength can only be achieved by use of redundancy and so the Service will be conducting a redundancy programme over the course of the next three years.

The first redundancy notices will be issued on September 30, with applicants leaving the Service by April 1 2012 and non-applicants by September 30 2012.

Details of the branches and specialisations being considered in this first round can be found in 2011DIN01-100 which was published in April 2011.

The branches to be considered in the second round will be announced early in October and the third round in Spring 2012.

The policy and criteria for selection are laid down in the DIN, and the process which is being followed to make selections is explained in a document entitled Royal Navy Tranche 1 Redundancy Implementation – Boarding and Process Instructions which can be found on the Fleet Redundancy Cell's website as well as on RNCom and the Naval Families' Federation and Royal Naval Association websites.

The uncertainty imposed by a redundancy round is never easy to deal with, and the Navy is making every effort to ensure that everyone is given access to as much information as possible so that they are aware of what is happening.

Clearly for those non-applicants who are leaving the Service there will be enormous upheaval to their lives, and every effort is being made to minimise the impact and assist in the transition to civilian life.

A comprehensive file containing advice on all aspects of transition will be given to each person selected for redundancy – applicants and non-applicants – and will include information on resettlement and pensions and also suggest other sources of assistance and advice available from other quarters such as the RNA, the NFF and other charitable organisations.

The Navy is working closely with those organisations to prepare the files.

For those that remain in the Service, it is inevitable that many will face considerable upheaval as a result of the need to relieve those being made redundant to ensure that OC is maintained.

This may mean that some personnel only recently returned from a sea draft returning to sea much more quickly than they were expecting, or that some serving at sea remain there longer than they were expecting.

Everything will be done to minimise this impact, but clearly it cannot be avoided altogether.

Further information on the redundancy process can be obtained from the Fleet Redundancy Cell which can be e-mailed at FLEET-REDUNDANCY.CELL@MAILBOX.MIL.

■ **Galaxy 25/2011: Publication of the Processes for Redundancy**

Reform, review and transform

THE FIRST Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, has released a message to all staff urging them to make the most of the opportunity of Lord Levene's Defence Reform review to take greater charge of the Navy's business.

The nation's most senior serving admiral said: "To many of you at the sharp end, this reform may seem remote from life onboard or in the field.

"However it is important as it sets the guiding context and governance structures for the numerous change programmes that are currently running."

He added: "The practical effects of the principles in the Lord Levene study is to set out a route-map for the future which will see the single services having more control of their business, whilst the MOD becomes consequently smaller and much more strategic in nature."

The admiral stressed that this is "a chance to improve how Defence does its business".

Among the most visible impacts for people within all three Services is the removal of the appointment of Commander in Chief, although this is part of a larger restructuring which will see changes across defence.

The post of C-in-C Fleet has been in place since 1971 when the C-in-C Western Fleet Admiral Sir William Donough O'Brien became the first Fleet Commander-in-Chief.

The First Sea Lord's message follows from the announcement of Dr Liam Fox, the Defence Secretary, at the end of June where he agreed with the recommendations of Lord Levene's Defence Reform review.

The independent report, which outlines a vision for how the MOD should be run and managed in the future, can be found online on the MOD website (www.mod.uk).

The report sets out the core functions needed for Defence to perform and made 53 detailed recommendations.

Among the key recommendations were the need to create a new, smaller Defence Board to strengthen top level decision-making, chaired by the Defence Secretary; to clarify the responsibilities of senior leaders; to make the Head Office smaller and more strategic; and to strengthen financial and performance management.

Dr Fox, in a speech to the Reform Think Tank on the morning of the announcement, stated it rather more forcefully, saying: "Lord Levene is clear in his critique.

"A department with overly bureaucratic

management structures, dominated by committees leading to indecisiveness and a lack of responsibility.

"A bloated top level Defence Board without Ministerial membership allowing strategic decision to drift and unable to reconcile ambition with resources.

"Budget holders without the levers needed to deliver and Ministers kept in the dark.

"Lord Levene has proposed a new, simpler and more cost-effective model for departmental management, with clear allocation of responsibility, authority and accountability.

"This will mark an end to the micromanagement of the individual services."

The report also proposed the creation of a four-star-led Joint Forces Command, strengthening focus on joint enablers and joint warfare development.

The impact of the changes recommended in the Defence Reform report are in the process of being understood within the Navy Command Review (NCR).

The process of NCR activity will be focused on the opportunities offered by Defence Reform to take greater ownership and responsibility for the generation and development of maritime capability to support Naval personnel on operations; and it is anticipated that organisational clarity will be achieved in late 2011 or early 2012.

Hence the next wave of change, as part of Defence Transformation, is expected to begin in April 2012.

Staff, both military and civilian, are urged to direct questions to their line managers or through the RN Continuous Improvement Team mailbox at FLEET-CS.CONT.IMP@MAILBOX.MIL, and to watch out for information on the RN intranet site in the RN IC Hub.

This ongoing process of transformation of defence brought a further slew of announcements in mid July regarding the Reserves Review and Basing Review, and the enduring financial implications of the changes ahead.

The Basing and Estates review reflects the changes in Forces' manning, and the return of some 20,000 personnel stationed in Germany. It also announced the intention to bring the bulk of the Royal Marines together in the south-west of England.

For more information see:

- **Galaxy 20/2011: 1SL's message on Defence Reform;**
- **Galaxy 24/2011: Navy Command Review update;**
- **2011DIB/54: Publication of the Defence Reform Review;**
- **2011DIB/65: Defence Transformation: Basing and estates**

Bright future for Reservists

THE final report from the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Independent Commission has been published with recommendations in the short and longer term on the future of Britain's Reserve forces.

The report has recommended urgent action to stabilise the Territorial Army, consideration of new roles for Reservists and adjustments to the balance between Regular and Reserve forces.

A formal response to the report will be made in the autumn, but Dr Liam Fox, Secretary of State for Defence, announced in mid-July a package of investment – which will amount to some £1.5 billion over the next ten years.

The commission has identified the ideal figures of trained Reservist manpower required by 2015 with a boost for the Navy from the October 2010 trained strength of 1,900 to 3,100 in 2015.

More information on the FR20 and the final report can be found online at www.mod.uk.

● **Reservists from HMS King Alfred march through Portsmouth (see page 16 for more)**



Today, tomorrow and beyond

THE First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, has sent out a Galaxy setting out his vision for the future of the Naval Service, entitled *The Royal Navy today, tomorrow and towards 2025*.

As the admiral explains: "It details why and how I see the Royal Navy, including the Royal Marines and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, developing in the challenging years ahead and what that means for our people, capabilities and force structure."

The First Sea Lord describes the document as a head-mark for the future Royal Navy and sets out the strategic context and its implications for the Royal Navy.

Furthermore he outlines the three core roles of the Royal Navy – warfighting, maritime security and international engagement – and the distinctive characteristics of what the Royal Navy will be as a fighting force.

■ **Galaxy 22-2011 The Royal Navy today, tomorrow and towards 2025**

where to look

GALAXY MESSAGES

Galaxy 20-2011: First Sea Lord's message on Defence Reform

Galaxy 21-2011: Changes to Council Tax Relief: Personal note from 2SL

Galaxy 22-2011: The Royal Navy Today, Tomorrow and Towards 2025

Galaxy 25-2011: Publication of the processes for redundancy

Galaxy 26-2011: Future Reserves 2020 study report DIBS

52/11: Launch of the Armed Forces Community Covenant scheme: On May 16 the Secretary of State published the Armed Forces Covenant which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces. One of the key measures which will improve support to the Armed Forces Community is the launch of a Community Covenant scheme.

55/11: Increase in Council Tax Relief for eligible Service personnel on Operations overseas: With effect from July 1, MOD is doubling Council Tax Relief (CTR) from 25 per cent to 50 per cent for all Service personnel on eligible operations overseas.

58/11: Extension of the payment of Operational Allowance to Op Ellamy: Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox announced on July 13 that Service personnel operating within the landmass, airspace and territorial waters of Libya are now eligible to receive Operational Allowance (OA).

63/11: Publication of the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Report: The Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) independent commission, led by VCDS, General Sir Nicholas Houghton, has on July 18 2011 published its final report which contains a number of immediate and longer term recommendations about the future of the UK's Reserve Forces' roles and structures.

65/11: Defence Transformation: Basing and Estates: The Secretary of State has announced the strategic, long-term direction to bring the Army back from Germany and the basing laydown for the RAF.

DINS
DIN 2011 DIN01-160: Support Fund for Schools with Service Children

DIN 2011 DIN01-154: Council Tax Relief (CTR) – Increase following Covenant Commitment

DIN 2011 DIN01-149: Service Life Insurance (SLI)

DIN 2011 DIN01-148: Changes to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2005 (AFPS 05)

RNTMS
Issue 10/11 RNTM 188/11: The Armed Forces Covenant
Issue 10/11 RNTM 195/11: NPFS information



● **Inside the Ops Room of HMS Liverpool off Libya**

Picture: LA(Phot) Caz Davies

Operational allowance extended to Libya

NAVAL Service personnel on operations in Libyan airspace and territorial waters as part of the ongoing campaign will receive the Operational Allowance.

Dr Liam Fox, the Secretary of State for Defence, said: "It is important that we recognise and reward those Service personnel who are engaged in the very highest areas of conflict.

"Eligibility for the Operational

Allowance reflects the rigour and risk of the operation in question.

"I am delighted that we can now extend these payments and recognise more of our brave Servicemen and women."

Pilots and aircrew operating over the Libyan landmass and the crew of ships and submarines operating within 12 nautical miles of the coast will receive the allowance.

Increase in council tax relief

FROM the start of last month, the MOD has doubled the Council Tax Relief for all Service personnel on eligible operations overseas.

The increase – from 25 per cent to 50 per cent – applies to all personnel serving in qualifying operational locations overseas, such as Iraq, Afghanistan and now including Libya, who pay for or are counted for Council Tax or Rates on a property in the UK.

CTR is paid as a tax-free lump sum on completion of duty, depending on the number of days in the qualifying location.

Full details and how to claim are published in JSP 754, Chapter 9, Section 11.

Evolving logistics

THE RECENT Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) outlined the future structure of the Royal Navy and the measures and reforms required to place programmes and resources back into balance, given the current and forecast economic climate.

These measures, such as hull reductions and redundancies, are determined by projected capability, size and structure of our future maritime force, set in a context of an unpredictable and rapidly-changing strategic environment out to 2040.

Our current manpower will be shaped to meet the Royal Navy's Future Force 2020, which is centred on a regenerated core capability of Carrier Strike provided by the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers and Littoral Manoeuvre at Commando Group scale.

This future force also comprises an escort force (Type 45 destroyers, Type 26 Global Combat Ship frigates) with continued service from the Mine Countermeasures fleet, Vanguard and Astute-class submarines, rotary-wing aircraft and logistic and survey vessels.

Whilst the strategic end state is this agile and resilient future force, it will also be smaller.

This requires corresponding manpower reductions across all branches, totalling 5,000 Fleet-wide, by 2015.

The Logistics Branch makes up 11 per cent of the Naval Service and will reduce proportionately.

The measures to achieve this reduction, in addition to normal manning controls and natural wastage, include a redundancy programme over three tranches.

The profile of the redundancies is determined by the structural measures implemented by SDSR.

The majority of reductions within the logistics branch are targeted at the front line manpower profile associated with the loss of hulls such as the Type 22 frigates, HMS Ark Royal and HMS Albion.

As these ships are predominantly manned at a more junior level, this restructuring is achieved through redundancies of Junior Officers and Ratings.

The remainder of reductions will be provided

from non-front line supporting organisations, and predominately be more senior Logistics Officers and Ratings.

The loss of personnel through the redundancy process will not be exactly in step with the organisational change which determines the number of positions that are to remain.

Whilst the number of logisticians and jobs will reach equilibrium in 2015, the redundancy process will see our people leave the Service by 2013 before organisational change is complete.

From the first tranche of redundancies announced on September 30, individuals selected for redundancy will proceed onto resettlement and leave, and the pool of manpower from which the Career Managers can fill their required positions will rapidly reduce.

Put simply, until equilibrium is met in 2015, some people will be lost ahead of positions and therefore gapping of jobs will be inevitable.

This will also be a period of employment churn, as personnel who remain are re-assigned to the positions which remain, driven by the Service Requirement to support the highest priority positions such as ships, submarines, operational HQs and deployable staffs.

The full breakdown of manning priorities for the Naval Service is contained within the DIN 2010 DIN01-146.

So, if the future shape of the Logistics Branch is smaller, what will its output be?

The challenge for the Logistics Branch is to continue to support maritime task group, Joint and multinational operations on a global scale and retain the ability to surge logistical support to meet the needs of emerging contingent operations.

Whilst the location and scope of future operations is uncertain, the significant contribution of logisticians will endure; whilst we make up nearly 11 per cent of the Royal Navy, Logistics Officers and Ratings currently account for 28 per cent of the enduring Operational Tour requirement.

The role of the future naval logistician is clear; he or she will be part of a smaller, more deployable and highly-flexible force.

With a continuing role on all future seagoing platforms and a disproportionately large commitment to operational tours, fitness to deploy is a key enabler of the branch.

The Medical Board of Survey and Royal Navy Fitness Test will continue to measure and control our medical and physical fitness to meet the demands of the high operational tempo of our future force.

Throughout the forthcoming churn of SDSR measures and redundancy, to the Future Force 2020 beyond, employment opportunities within the Logistics Branch will remain exciting, challenging and relevant.

Assignments will continue to be varied, from traditional logistic roles on ships and submarines, in supporting roles ashore with commercial partners, to roles within Joint and NATO response forces at very high readiness to deploy world-wide.

Employment within the core sub-specialisations (Writer, Catering Services and Supply Chain) will endure and specialist maritime logistic roles at sea and ashore will remain the backbone of a logistician's employment throughout their career.

However, never have core military skills such as command, leadership and management, been more in demand than meeting the greater range and depth of tasks which the scope of the Future Force will require.

Assignments demand a 'sailor first' approach and individuals will continue to be provided regular opportunities throughout their careers to undertake leadership training and develop their management skills.

Whether it is providing force protection on strategic maritime assets, executive roles at sea and ashore, or embedding with Joint Force Support and Royal Marine Commando units, there are a wide range of opportunities for individuals to demonstrate their broader military skills as well as being capable logisticians.

We are becoming more Joint, more interoperable with multinational forces, and logisticians must be able to work seamlessly alongside their Army, RAF

and coalition counterparts in the full spectrum of demanding assignments they fill.

They must be capable of applying common policies, procedures and systems in the delivery of single Service and Joint logistics, with the credibility of current and relevant operational experience at sea and on shore.

While our logisticians are primarily dark blue, they exude a very purple tinge.

Whilst we experience the uncertainty, change and churn that SDSR measures bring, it is vital that logisticians continue to feel that both a job well done and their longer term potential continues to be recognised and rewarded.

In order to provide a motivated and capable logistic force, both now and in the future, every individual is encouraged to attain their personal best, with appropriate training, educational opportunities and professional accreditation at all levels.

Logisticians, from able rating to admiral, will continue to be recognised through honours and awards for their outstanding contribution to both operations and the wider Service.

Whilst the Future Force will see a reduced headcount by 2015, promotion prospects will remain equal to, if not better than, today.

Logistics career management is undertaken by Naval Personnel Team (Logistics and Medical) at West Battery, Whale Island, for Officers and Senior Ratings and at the Career Management Cells in the Naval Base Waterfront offices for Junior Ratings.

During this period of substantial turbulence and into the future, the Logistics Career Managers will continue to bring together and develop the logistician's skills and experience in order to provide a sufficient, highly skilled and motivated workforce.

Whilst the defining feature of the future will be its unpredictability, what is certain is that there will still be exciting opportunities for our Logistics Branch to plan, execute and sustain future operations.

Our people will be provided with the opportunities to realise their full potential across one of the widest employment spectrums in Defence.

The best training that you can get

THE ROYAL Navy Individual Pre-Deployment Training and Mounting Centre (RNIPDT&MC), based in Jervis Block, HMS Nelson, has the task of coordinating Pre-Deployment Training (PDT) for personnel deploying to land-based operations worldwide.

Or put another way, giving sailors sufficient soldiering skills so that they are capable and confident in performing force protection for themselves and those around them.

Established in Mar 2003 in direct support of Op Telic, the RNIPDT&MC was tasked with an administration role to provide deploying RN personnel with the correct kit and documentation prior to deployment to Iraq.

With the cessation of operations in Iraq the deployment of personnel is now predominantly Op Herrick-focused.

The RNIPDT&MC remains the focal point for all Individual Augmentees (IAs) preparing to deploy and the delivery of training designed to give them "the specific skill set, built upon collective war-fighting training, that equips the individual for deploying to operations in a specific theatre, role or environment." The delivery of this training is mandated by Chief of Joint Operations (CJO).

The main remit is to support individuals with their preparations and coordinate training in common core military skills for their subsequent tours of duty.

All personnel nominated for duties under the Operational Command (OPCOM) of CJO deploy via the RNIPDT&MC.

Whilst this is now predominantly for operations in Afghanistan the RNIPDT&MC also trains personnel for the more benign deployments.

The two-week training process is designed to alleviate the fears and apprehensions of

the individual associated with sending RN or RM personnel off to (mostly) sunnier climes for land-based Ops and to ensure the individual is a Force Protection asset wherever they deploy.

Throughout training the RNIPDT&MC's aim is to provide the right kit, training and preparations whilst ensuring personnel are in the right frame of mind and are ready to meet the challenges of being based in a potentially hostile environment or situation.

This includes ensuring all documentation is correct and up to date, weapons are zeroed, kit fits correctly, contact drills are practised, theatre-specific lectures briefed and onward flight bookings completed.

Essentially, the RNIPDT&MC is a 'one-stop shop' for all personnel deploying.

However, before personnel arrive at HMS Nelson for the start of their PDT, much preparation will need to have taken place and therefore early contact with the RNIPDT&MC for guidance and a contact address for joining instructions is essential.

■ What can you do to help?

Having contacted the RNIPDT&MC and received details of your Assignment or Appointment, discuss the requirements with your Divisional Officer or Line Manager.

Look at the Job Specs for your particular role in theatre. Arrange to be released to complete training and administrative checks.

It is essential that the following are achieved before you arrive at the RNIPDT&MC for PDT:

- Completed the appropriate Small Arms course for the weapons system with which you will deploy, NMT 104 (5.56mm Rifle ADQUAL) and/or NMT 109 (9mm Pistol ADQUAL), if in doubt seek advice from RNIPDT&MC. If you already

hold these ADQUALs, ensure you pass the RNAPWT within six months of your theatre joining date, and your WHT within two months prior to your PDT. All weapon handling must be reflected on your Weapon Firing History Sheet.

- Ensure your Respirator has been tested on the new Respirator Testing System (RTS) and annotated on the S3138 Respirator Haversack Card.

- Pass the RN Fitness Test (RNFT) and remain in date for the whole of your deployment. You are advised to increase your physical fitness before attending PDT.

- Medically in date for PULHHEEM and vaccinations. Obtain advice on Anthrax vaccination and the requirement for Anti-Malaria prophylaxis.

- Make sure you are dentally fit to deploy.

- Ensure your passport has 12 months remaining from the date you are to deploy.

On arrival at RNIPDT&MC for your PDT, the following must be carried:

- Completed RNIPDT&MC pre-joining tasks proforma.

- Passport.

- Driving Licence (if held) plus a photocopy of paper and plastic version.

- FMED 965 (Obtained from Sick Bay).

- Weapon Firing History Sheet plus photocopy.

- MOD Form 90 (ID Card) in pristine condition

- S10 Respirator.

- Kit Record Book.

- ID Discs x 2.

- E111 – Reciprocal National Health Arrangements for EC countries.

- RM Only – Copy of RORRS Record 2 (S3300B) as proof that you are in date for ITD (RM) 1 to 6, 8 & 13. Alternatively, an ITD Record Sheet. Officers



Drafty's page

should carry a letter confirming their ITD (RM) dates from their Unit Training Officer

The two-week PDT courses are held monthly, based centrally at HMS Nelson, with nominees generally loaded around their deployment dates.

The course remains valid for six months from completion and for 12 months on returning from theatre.

PDT is both physically and mentally demanding. As well as having passed the RNFT, students are advised to embark on a physical training programme to prepare them for physical tasks. This will include a 2.4km walk wearing Osprey Body Armour weighing approx 20kg.

A simple guide to the course programme is:

Week 1

Day 1 & 2: Admin Day (issue of personal weapons, document checks, kit issue etc). Mandated briefings including Operational Law,



● Training at Longmoor camp with the RNIPDT&MC
Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Gallagher

ComSec, Media, Environmental Health, Operational Stress, and Cultural Awareness.

Day 3: C-IED Briefing Day.

Day 4 & 5: CBRN Training and Battlefield Casualty Drills - First Aid Training.

Week 2

Day 1: Move to Longmoor Training Camp – Commence practical training element.

Day 2: Continue practical element and in theatre briefs.

Day 3 & 4: Ex Desert Heat (Final Exercise) – including foot patrols, vehicle anti-ambush drills, contact drills etc. On completion return to HMS Nelson.

Day 5: Final briefings on TRiM, Pay and Allowances and final admin

Before being pronounced ready to deploy, individuals

have a personal part to play in ensuring they are ready to meet the demanding commitment to land-based operations.

Learning you have an appointment/assignment to an operation within a war zone can be daunting and challenging.

You will receive the best training available and can rest assured that although you may be in a new, land based environment, you have all the competences, equipment and knowledge to contribute a vital part throughout your deployment.

Start planning now. You never know you might even enjoy it!

Full details are available in DIN2011 DIN07-104.

The RNIPDT&MC Staff is dedicated to helping you through the whole process.

■ See also feature Key FOB opens doors on page 19

Met Office moves to new home

NO LONGER will the men and women of the Met Office be part of the MOD but part of the transfer of the organisation to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The Met Office, along with the Land Registry and Ordnance Survey, moved to their new governmental home in mid-July – another step towards the establishment of a Public Data Corporation.

Of course, the MOD will continue to call upon the services of the Met Office and rely on their support for the Armed Forces in the UK and overseas.

The Met Office began life within the Board of Trade in 1854, before becoming part of the Air Ministry in 1920. It became part of the MOD in 1964.

Covenant and community

A RECENT RNTM brings together various Galaxies and Defence Internal Briefs to give a useful package of information about the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) and its implications.

The full text of the covenant – in full *The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow* – can be found online at www.mod.uk.

RNTM 188/11 describes the AFC as “a strategy which builds on the previous administration’s Service Personnel Command Paper to outline the Government’s aspiration that the Armed Forces Community should suffer no disadvantage as a result of their Service, and that they should receive special treatment where appropriate.”

It further describes how, although the key principles have been written in law, it does not mean that legally enforceable rights are created for Service personnel, but it does mean

that the Defence Secretary has to report annually to Parliament on performance against the Covenant.

The RNTM urges members of the Naval service to gain a basic understanding of the Covenant and its benefits so that sailors and marines can take full advantage of the opportunities it presents for themselves and their families.

The AFC is broken down into 16 sections, each relating to Service or veteran life. These are:

- Terms and conditions of service;
- Healthcare;
- Education;
- Housing;
- Benefits and tax;
- Responsibility of care;
- Deployment;
- Family life;
- Commercial products and services;
- Transition;
- Support after Service;

- Recognition;
- Participation as citizens;
- Changes in Defence;
- Recourse;
- The Covenant and wider society.

Local authorities are further being encouraged to set up a Community Covenant scheme to support the Service community in their area and improve understanding among the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces.

The Community scheme has an associated grant of £30million to support projects at the local level.

If you think that you are losing out, your first port of call should be your Divisional Officer and to raise the problem through your chain of command.

You can also turn to the NFF for advice and support on a range of issues.

■ *RNTM 188/11: The Armed Forces Covenant*

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION

Children focus for Naval families

ONCE again the summer months have provided an opportunity to see lots of families at a host of events. We hope that we have either seen you at a Families Day or can look forward to meeting you at the base or ship that your Serving person is working on, writes Jane Williams of the NFF.

The survey asking you to ‘Have your say; Future Accommodation for Service Families’ has been a hive of activity with thousands of respondents. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey.

All the information will be taken forward this September to inform the Future Accommodation Project team, undiluted and as is.

Once the announcements from the findings are available we will report back. Watch this space...

■ Increase in Council Tax Relief for eligible Service personnel on Operations overseas

With effect from July 1 2011 the MOD is doubling Council Tax Relief from 25 per cent to 50 per cent for all Service personnel on eligible operations overseas.

Increasing the Council Tax Relief rate is just one of the commitments announced in the *Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow* published on May 16.

In addition, Council Tax Relief is now extended to include Op Ellamy (personnel deployed within the Joint Operational Area (JOA) specifically in support of the Operation). For full information visit the website www.nff.org.uk

■ New Medal to Mark the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee

Members of the Armed Forces will be presented with a medal to mark the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee on February 6 2012.

The commemorative medal is designed to mark the Queen’s 60 years on the throne and will be awarded to members of the emergency services, Prison Service and the following Armed Forces personnel:

- members of the Armed Forces (Regular and Reserves) who have completed five full calendar years of service on February 6 2012;
- living holders of the Victoria Cross and George Cross;
- members of the Royal Household.

The MOD will issue detailed qualifying criteria applying to their personnel later this summer.



The one-off medal is made of nickel silver and designed by Timothy Noad, a professional calligrapher and illuminator.

The medal depicts a formal image of the Queen on one side, while the reverse shows a hexagon with a crown and royal cipher, inscribed ‘1952 to 2012’, commemorating Her Majesty’s reign, and finished off with a red ribbon and white/blue stripes.

Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Liam Fox, said: “This announcement of a Diamond Jubilee Medal for our Armed Forces gives us all the opportunity to celebrate both the Queen’s service to the country over the last 60 years and the service of our Armed Forces in her name.”

■ Continuity of Education Allowance

The review team tasked with taking an in depth look at Continuity of Education Allowance has made its cost savings recommendations. They now sit with the Secretary of State awaiting announcement.

Announcements were due in July, however, we have been informed that this has been delayed.

As mentioned in last month’s *Navy News* please keep an eye on the website for updates: www.nff.org.uk

■ Ofsted Report

Service children who face regular moves from home and school can suffer high levels of anxiety and stress, especially when their parents deploy to armed conflicts overseas, according to an Ofsted report (published May

20 2011).

The report, *Children in Service families: The quality and impact of partnership provision for children in Service families*, found that this problem was exacerbated because systems of transfer of children’s records between schools were not always properly coordinated and important information was therefore delayed or did not arrive at all.

The Report states that although many Service children, with support, do catch up or exceed the achievement of their civilian peers, some did not achieve the grades they might have achieved if they had not been moving around so much.

A key shortcoming was that there is no accurate single database of Service children or effective system to track their movements.

There was also generally a lack of continuity of support and provision for children from Service families as they move between schools, heightened in areas where small numbers of Service children were being catered for and where there was less understanding of their needs.

The report, requested by the Ministry of Defence, also found that Service children were potentially susceptible to social and emotional disturbance while

a parent or other family member was on active deployment.

The report recommends:

- An accurate database to track where Service children and young people are here and overseas;
- The Department for Education should collate and distribute the most up-to-date research and good practice relating to Service children and their families to help schools and local authorities better understand and respond to their needs;
- The Department for Education should ensure that national policy includes Service children as a distinctive group so that their specific needs remain visible;
- The MOD should, as far as operational priorities permit, allow greater flexibility in relation to movement dates for the families of serving personnel (the NFF has this on its radar);
- Schools should be aware of the distinct needs of Service children and make any necessary provision for them;
- Schools should improve the system for the transfer of Service children and their records from one school to another. They should use all available information to carry out a prompt assessment of children’s needs;
- Local authorities should ensure the timely assessment of Service children’s particular needs and work with schools to develop an effective system for the transfer of documentation of any child with special needs or disabilities;
- Local authorities should re-evaluate their admissions processes to ensure they take appropriate account of requests from Service families for school places.

Do you agree? We want to know. Your experiences form the basis of all our discussions; to get in touch with the NFF: tel: 02392 654374, e-mail Admin@nff.org.uk or write to us at Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.



NOTICEBOARD

1971 1981 1991 2001 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● HMS Alderney pictured in 1981

August 1971

THE 24-year-old submarine HMS Artemis sank at her moorings at HMS Dolphin due to water flooding around her stern. The submarine, which was due to pay off within a year of the incident, took less than a minute to fully sink.

A duty watch of 14 was on board at the time, 11 of whom were able to escape safely. The remaining three ratings managed to seek refuge in the forward torpedo stowage compartment, where they remained for ten hours until the decision was made to use the escape system rather than wait any longer for the boat to be raised and cleared of water.

Throughout the incident, HMS Ocelot, which was berthed alongside Artemis, was able to communicate with the trapped crew members by radio telephone. The decision to escape by the emergence system was made when it was realised that the flotation devices necessary for the raising would not be available until the following day.

All three men escaped without major injury.

August 1981

THE Cod War reached its zenith when a boarding party from HMS Alderney to the French vessel Jean Mermoz was threatened with knives and an acetylene torch as they attempted to establish a tow.

Throughout the day-long encounter, Alderney was harassed and rammed by a second French trawler and had nets cast over her bow in an attempt to distract her from taking the Jean Mermoz into Grimsby.

During the escape attempt, in which the Jean Mermoz made a direct course for Boulogne with two RN boarding teams still on board, an RAF Sea King was called to buzz the French trawler and fire red flares across her bow in a show of force.

She eventually yielded when she collided with Alderney in an erratic attempt at evasion, severely damaging her own fishing gear in the process.

In the subsequent hearing at Grimsby Magistrates’ Court, the episode cost the Frenchmen £6,796 in fines, with an additional £2,600 for the damage to HMS Alderney.

August 1991

THE then First Sea Lord, Sir Julian Oswald, made history as the first senior British Naval Officer to visit the shipyards of the Soviet Union. Travelling over 3,700 miles in six days, he visited three of the four major Soviet fleet areas.

Starting in Severomorsk, the First Sea Lord was invited to view a range of vessels, including a Victor III nuclear hunter-killer submarine.

He also visited one of the shipbuilding facilities at Leningrad where they were built, before giving a speech to senior naval personnel.

Despite running over a public holiday, over 800 senior officers attended a briefing, which was later described as ‘lively’, owing to some of the political content covered...

Other activities included gunnery and unarmed combat demonstrations, including a battalion-strength amphibious assault prepared especially for the occasion.

Upon completion, the First Sea Lord was presented with a submarine commander’s uniform and badge to mark his visit.

■ See opposite page for obituary

August 2001

ALMOST 200 Royal Naval personnel provided Liverpool with vital emergency firefighting cover during the Mersey firemen’s strike, becoming involved in several major incidents.

Working 12-hour rotating shifts, Armed Forces personnel ended up covering a 16-day period due to the firemen’s demands not being met.

Over 1,000 calls were received by RN and Armed Forces personnel throughout the course of the original eight-day strike, which amounted to over three times the number expected, principally due to a five-fold increase in hoax calling.

The Royal Navy crewed ten Green Goddess vehicles which were dispatched to a mixture of incidents, including a car fire, a major fire at Southport scrapyard and a near-fatal incident involving a burning butane gas cylinder.

In the latter, PO Bob Willis and MEMs Jack Russell and Richard Lark noticed the cylinder when attending a bin fire, but were able to scan it for ‘hot spots’ using RN thermal imaging equipment before disposing of it in an improvised cooling system – otherwise known as a bin filled with water.

Because of the Navy’s diligence, there were no major casualties over their 16-day shift.

Death of former First Sea Lord

ADMIRAL of the Fleet Sir Julian Oswald, former Commander-in-Chief Fleet and First Sea Lord, has died at the age of 77.

Julian Oswald was born in Selkirk, Scotland, in 1933 and joined the Royal Navy at the age of 13. Marked out for success as a junior officer, he specialised in gunnery and served as Air Weapons Officer in HMS Victorious and on the staff of the naval gunnery school at HMS Excellent.

He commanded three ships, the coastal minesweeper HMS Yarnnton, the Leander-class frigate HMS Bacchante, and the Type 42 destroyer HMS Newcastle. He served in another five, including HMS Vanguard, the Navy's last battleship; and HMS Newfoundland.

At the Ministry of Defence he worked in the Directorate of Navy Plans and twice in the Defence Policy Staff. His varied appointments included Captain in charge of the RN Presentation Team in 1979-80 and Captain of Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, in 1980-82.

He was promoted Rear Admiral in 1982 when he became Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Programmes), Vice Admiral in 1986 and Admiral in 1987 when he became Commander-in-Chief Fleet and the Allied Commander-in-Chief Channel

and Eastern Atlantic Area.

In May 1989 he took up the appointment of Chief of Naval Staff and First Sea Lord and was appointed First and Principal Aide-de-Camp to the Queen.

Described throughout his career as a remarkably talented and capable officer, Admiral Oswald was also known for his humanity and keen sense of humour.

Naval records pay tribute to his political sensitivity, his skill at resolving difficult situations, and his considerable depth of character, personal steel and sharp mind.

Admiral Oswald lived in Shedfield, Hampshire, with his wife Roni. The couple had two sons and three daughters.

In retirement he held many appointments, including Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts; President of the Sea Cadet Association; Chairman of the Ends of the Earth Club and of the Naval Review, Chairman of the National Historic Ships' Committee, and Stowaway of the Southampton Master Mariners.

He was also a Governor of Portsmouth University and a patron of the Rowans House Hospice, near Portsmouth.

Among his numerous other interests were gliding, tennis, fishing and stamps. He died on July 19, just over three weeks short of his 78th birthday.

Deaths

Lt Sara Hellawell. Deputy marine engineering officer HMS Edinburgh. Previous Sea Cadet. On board ship whilst in Angola. June.

Cdr David Edwards. Volunteered for the Royal Navy and spent some time with a team at the torpedo school at Vernon that was assisting on the design of magnetic and acoustic mines and their countermeasures. In 1940 he was sent to Lowestoft to fit new minesweeping equipment to two fishing vessels, Resparko and Revello, after which he was supplied with charts and sealed orders and told to proceed to Le Havre in Resparko, where he found French naval vessels trapped in harbour by mines. The French had no means of sweeping and had already lost several ships so he assumed responsibility for clearing a channel. On her way into harbour Resparko exploded a number of mines but her cable became entangled around a buoy and he had to cut through it; then the ship's electrical protection against mines was disabled by a nearby explosion which knocked out a generator. Most of the crew were lowered away in boats but Edwards went down to the engine room to repair the protective degaussing system as the hull drifted over magnetic mines. After a week the channel was cleared through the Seine. Post-war he worked at the Admiralty's radar research establishment at Malvern and in 1954 was appointed to Cardigan Bay employed as guardship in Hong Kong and off Korea and on anti-piracy patrols around Borneo and Indonesia. Promoted commander in 1956 he spent 18 months on staff of Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers before being appointed to Washington to work with the US Navy on the purchase of Phantom jets for the RAF and the RN. He returned to the Admiralty at Bath and worked on as a civilian until his final retirement in 1971. May 1. Aged 92.

David Hart. LSA(V). Ex-Royal Hospital schoolboy. Served 1954-70 in Cossack, Comus, Sea Eagle, Afrikander, Birmingham and Nubian. June 11. Aged 72.

Robert 'Bob' Fleming. AB. Served 1939-50 on board Nelson on Malta convoys 1942, Adamant, Vernon and Victory. July 3. Aged 85.

John 'Jack' Pearson. L/Stoker. Served 11 years. Junior Stoker, aged 17, aboard Thesus (Korea 1950-51). Member of Fellowship of the Services. May 12. Aged 78.

James 'Lofty' Loe. Able Seaman. Working top part of ship he served in the cruiser Liverpool 1948-50. HMS Liverpool Association since 1983. July 2.

Peter Lunt. LAM(AE). Served 1954-63 in Gamecock, Blackcap, Sea Eagle, Nuthatch, Fulmar, Condor, Heron, Eagle and Hermes (Mediterranean and Far East). Trained as a diver at Vernon where he checked the underside of ships for mines. Fleet Air Arm Association, and served as Branch Chairman 2007-09. June 10. Aged 74.

Charles Anthony 'Tony' Knowles. L/PTI. Served 1955-66. HMS Ganges Association. June 25. Aged 72.

Kenneth Gibson Fraser. WO Catering. Joined as a boy sailor in 1948 and served for 34 years in Ark Royal and Puma; also at Sultan, Mercury and Chatham. The Craft Guild of Chefs, The British Culinary Federation and an Honorary member and judge of the World Association of Chefs Societies. June 8. Aged 78.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
S/Lt Roger Higgins RNR. National Service 1958-60 in Cyprus. Past Treasurer Warwick RNA. June 12. Aged 77.

Derek Layton. WO AAE. Joined 1946 aged 16 and trained as Apprentice Air Artificer. Served RNAS Lee-on-Solent, Torpoint, Rosyth, Arbroath, St Mirren, Boscombe Down, Lossiemouth 803 NAS, Ark Royal, Yeovilton 896 Squadron and 796 Squadron Portland. Air Artificer Apprentice Association and Sherborne RNA. June 25. Aged 80.

Derek 'Buster' Brown. CPO M(E). Joined at Excalibur and served 1947-69 aboard Jamaica (1948-51), Alaunia (1951), Orion (1951-52), Battleaxe (1955-56), Walkerton (1958-60), Bermuda (1961-62), Jufair (1963-65), Maidstone (1965-67) and Tiger (1967-69). St Dunstons and RNA Plymouth. June 3. Aged 82.

Joan Fone (née Relp). Chief Wren SA. Joined at Dauntless and served 1956-82. RNAS Culdrose (two years), RMB Eastney (58), Malta and Pembroke (59), President including Gibraltar (60-64), RMB Deal (64 and 69-73) including a period in Hong Kong, Raleigh (73-80) and Drake (80-82). Represented the RN and Combined Services at netball and gained Under 21 England International honours. RNA mentor (known as Auntie Joan) to new recruits at Raleigh (2009-11). Plymouth branch. June 9. Aged 73.

Jack 'William' Evans. CPO Tel/CRS. Port Division, Devonport. Joined Ganges and served 1934-58. Boy Telegraphist at Royal Sovereign (1936), Rodney (1936-37), Suffolk

Ask Jack

HMS Atheling, February 1944 to August 1945: I am trying to find a photograph of my late uncle who was a Regulating PO and then temporary MAA on this vessel over that period. His name was Sydney George Preston. Contact T W Preston at prestonstrandrye@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 01797 229009.

HMS Tyler: Graham Bell is seeking two ex-shipmates, Sam Corker and Ken Giles. If you are still out there contact Graham at grahambell212@talktalk.net or tel: 07806 458268.

Alan Cox (previously Weston) living in Western Australia is visiting the UK next year and would like to meet with ex-Leading Air Mechanic (CPO on board Ark Royal 1975-77) Anthony Weston whom he hasn't seen since the mid 70s. Contact Alan's father-in-law in the UK at ray.suter@gmail.com or tel: 01258 860787.

(1937-39), Diamond (1939-40), La Moqueuse (1941), Stadacona (1942-44), Loch Gorm (1944-46), Dunkirk (1947-48), Unicorn (1948-49), Camperdown (1949), Sparrow (1949-51), Crane (1955-56) and Venus (1957-58). Plymouth RNA. July 6. Aged 92.

Martha Wheeler (née Scott). Ldg Wren. Served 1941-46 at Lochinvar and Hopetoun. Hanworth branch. June. Aged 91.

George C R Macdonald. Tel. Served 1943-46 at Royal Arthur, Scotia, Allington Castle, Glensyle and Anderson. Served nine years in the Merchant Navy as a Radio/Radar Officer. Beccles branch. July 3. Aged 86.

SURVEY SHIPS ASSOCIATION
Peter 'Jan' Spray. MAA. Served 1959-83 in Scott, Ulster, Lofoten, Sheba, Brearley, Victorious, Forth, Bulwark, Seahawk, Pollington and Hydra (Falklands Conflict). January. Aged 68.

Stephen Hackett. LAEM(R). Served 1967-87 in Hydra. February. Aged 59.

Cdr John Pryor. Served in Erebus, Sheffield and Hood. Captured at St Valerie after Hebe went aground after returning to the beach a second time having successfully lifted 200 of the 51st Highlanders to safety. Escaped and recaptured from POW camp. Hydrographic Service aboard Cook and Franklin; commanded Owen and Dampier. Assistant Hydrographer. April 15. Aged 91.

Philip Page. AB. Served 1950-52 aboard Scott. April.

Lawrence Thomas. LEM. Served 1947-54 aboard Dalrymple. May. Aged 82.

Paul 'Adge' Cutler. MEAH. Served 1963-87 aboard Hecla, Fox/Fawn and Endurance (Falklands Conflict). June. Aged 64.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
E 'Eric' Baker. AB HSD. Submarine service 1952-62 in Tantiy and Tally-Ho. Middlesex branch. Aged 83.

S A 'Steve' Bottrill. ERA. Submarine service 1951-54 in Alliance. Portsmouth branch. Aged 86.

K J 'Kevin' Butler. EM1. Submarine service 1962-66 in Grampus (1962-64), Porpoise (1964) and Turpin (1964-65). Espana Levante branch. Aged 72.

Lt Cdr G 'George' Christie DSC RNR. Submarine service 1941-46 in P612, Muratreis, Neepjiska, Thrasher, Stubbhorn, H50 and U2529. Dolphin branch. Aged 91.

EW 'Ted' Maby. LME. Submarine service 1953-57 in Tradewind, Scorch (1953-54), Sidon (1954-55) and Scythian (1955-57). Dorset branch. Aged 79.

J 'Joe' Peacock. Stoker. Submarine service 1946-48 in Sturdy, Spur, Scorch, Aeneas and Amphion. New Zealand branch.

H V 'Vic' Preece. CPO Coxn. Submarine service 1941-53 in H33 (1941), Unruffled (1942-43), P614 (1944), Vitality (1944), Vagabond (1944), Auriga (1945) and Sentinel (1947). Lincoln branch. Aged 89.

B 'Barry' Priest. FCPPO. MEM(P). Submarine service 1959-81 in Trump, Talent, Tiptoe, Totem, Seadevil and Valiant. Brierley Hill branch. Aged 72.

N 'Norman' Richards. CERA. Submarine service 1944-45 in Upshot. Hull branch. Aged 86.

C W P 'Claude' Roberts. CPO Coxn. Submarine service 1945-65 in Spur, Totem, Tapir, Trump (twice), Scotsman, Tactician, Solent, Alliance, Truncheon, Seraph and Excalibur. Barrow and Australia branches. Aged 88.

G 'Gerry' Watson. CPO TASI. Submarine service 1950-56 in Tiptoe, Aucochs, Scythian, Sirdar, Seascout and Subtle. Gosport branch. Aged 80.

Cdr S J 'Steve' Watson. Submarine service 1966-83 in Repulse. Dorset branch. Aged 72.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
J L Johnson. Served in LST 3016 and Dieppe. February 15.

G M Barwell JP. Served in LSTs, Vanity and Cardigan Bay. April 14.

G E Martin. Served LCM & Mobile Base. May 4.

H Grayland. Served in LCI(L) 297, LCT 1286 and LSC(E) 120. May 31.

C A McDonald. Served LCA Flotilla 812 and LSL(L) Rocksand. June 9.

Ron Gaskell. Served LSTs 322 and 409. June 15.

A Marchant. Served in LCI(L) 380 and LCTs 2240 and 2458. June 22.

S Barnes. Served in LSE(LC) 50 and LSTs 410 and 425. June 26.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
Geoffrey Christopher. L/Sig. Served aboard Welcome. June 9. Aged 81.

Donald Head. Tel. Served aboard Bramble. June 11. Aged 74.

Gerald 'Gerry' Smart. AB. Served aboard Plucky. June 11 in Australia. Aged 86.

Robert Farnworth. PO/RM. Served aboard Magicienne. June 12. Aged 84.

Colin Morris. AB. Served aboard Mary Rose. June 22. Aged 86.

Ken Wardle. LEM. Served aboard Coquette and Wave. June 28. Aged 79.

Competition

Congratulations to the winners of the Royal Marines HM Armed Forces toys competition in last month's Navy News (July), who are:

Graham Crowe, Netherfield, Nottingham; Jack Pears, Southsea, Hampshire; Brian James, Tushill, Chesham; Mr A McGeechan, Motherwell; and Mr P McKeown, Clevedon, North Somerset.

Assignments

Cdr Rex J Cox to be CO of HMS York from August 23.

NOTICEBOARD

Trophy lives



Following the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940 British military minds turned their attention to the – eventual – re-occupation of mainland Europe.

The aim, under the title of Combined Operations, was to develop amphibious warfare equipment and techniques in preparation for that invasion.

In 1942, largely to test the theories, a major raid was planned on a German-held French port with the aim of holding it for the duration of at least two tides – about nine hours in all – and to cause the greatest amount of destruction of enemy facilities and defences before withdrawing.

Such a raid needed perfect planning and the element of surprise if it was to succeed and the selected port – Dieppe – was heavily defended by the Germans.

On August 18 1942 over 250 ships loaded with troops and equipment and escorted by destroyers sailed from southern England; the land and sea Task Force Commanders, General Roberts and Captain Hughes-Hallett, were embarked in the destroyer HMS Calpe.

In addition to the escorting destroyers the force was preceded by minesweepers, one of which was HMS Blackpool.

She had been launched in 1940 and on her commissioning in 1941 she was presented with the silver salver illustrated above, **Trophy No 2740**.

By 0300 on August 19 the force was off Dieppe and had not been detected by the Germans.

By 0335, on schedule, a total of 5,000 Canadians, 1,000 British troops and 50 American Rangers were making for the four designated beaches but some landing craft headed for the wrong beaches and time was lost in rectifying this.

A British gunboat was then unexpectedly engaged by five German armed trawlers, the sound of the gunfire serving to alert the defenders.

One landing craft did reach shore unnoticed and its 20 occupants were able to neutralise one enemy gun battery – sadly, this was the only real success of this raid.

On the other beaches well-sited German defences wreaked havoc; only 60 men of the 543 landed by the Royal Regiment of Canada were recovered, the destroyers providing gunfire support were outgunned by the enemy while those tanks that were landed and not destroyed by anti-tank fire had severe difficulty in moving on the shingle beaches.

Only ten of the 24 landing craft managed to land their tanks – a total of 28 – and those which did reach Dieppe town were destroyed.

Canadian Royal Engineers tried to help the tanks but with little success and they suffered a 60 per cent casualty attrition rate.

With many of the beach commanders being killed little meaningful intelligence was reaching HMS Calpe from the invading force but, by 0900, it was apparent that very little was going to plan and a withdrawal was ordered which was achieved by early afternoon.

The cost of this largely unsuccessful raid was horrific; of the 6,050 men landed 4,384 died or were captured, all guns, tanks and other equipment landed was lost, the Navy lost 550 men and 34 ships while the RAF lost 106 aircraft.

In spite of appalling loss of life many vital lessons were learned at Dieppe; as a result plans for future invasions (notably in Italy and for D-Day) incorporated more flexibility and greater attention to detail.

Reunions

SEPTEMBER 2011

Fleet Air Arm: Each year members of the Greater Manchester branch of the Fleet Air Arm Association travel down to Lee-on-the-Solent to hold a service of remembrance. This year it will be held at the Fleet Air Arm Memorial, Marine Parade, Lee-on-the-Solent on September 7 at 1100. All serving and ex-servicemen are very welcome also Standards would be appreciated. For more information contact Bernie Cohen at b.cohen2@ntlworld.com or tel: 0161 946 1209.

OCTOBER 2011

HMS Gambia Association: AGM and reunion at Leamington Spa from October 7 to 9. Contact John Andrews, Social Secretary at babsjo2@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 01970 627811 or write to 10 St James Mews, Great Darkgate Street, Aberystwyth, SY23 3RZ.

HMS Eagle, Last Commission 1969-72: Friends of HMS Eagle are holding a Nautical Experience Reunion at the Queensferry Hotel, North Queensferry, with fantastic views overlooking the Firth of Forth, from October 7 to 9. After the very successful last four reunions around the country – all Eaglets plus wives/partners and guests are very welcome to re-enact the Rosyth & Edinburgh visits. Meet & Greet on the Friday evening in the Pentlands suite. On Saturday there are various tours from the hotel, plus a choice of visits to HMV Britannia, Edinburgh Castle, BAE Systems, Rosyth Dockyard, Dufferline Cathedral and Burnt Island where Eagle was scrapped, followed in the evening by a very nautical dinner, dance and entertainment including local Sea Cadet unit at Rosyth, involvement including Ceremonial, Sunset & Up Spirits. All commissions 1952-72 very welcome. Hotel accommodation at very good rates. For details contact main organisers Danny du Feu (Ex-L/Sea(Boats)) email danny@cdf-photography.co.uk; Mob: 07966 258103 or write to: 57 Westover Road, Leicester, LE3 3DU or Events Sec Bill Melvin (Ex-LPTI) email: bill.melvin@virgin.net; Mob: 07740 439987. See you there!

HMS St Vincent Association: The 15th AGM will be held at St Vincent College, Gosport on October 8 starting at 1100 followed by lunch. Members will be able to visit the St Vincent Museum before and after the AGM. Bookings can be made through Isle of Wight Tours on 01983 405116 for the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, where the Gala Reunion Dinner will be held in the evening. For more details see our website at <http://www.hmsstvincentsassoc.org> or

email David Coleman at davidcoleman197@btinternet.com or tel: 01305 260761. For membership information contact Joe Cornish at jocornish@onetel.net.uk or tel: 01480 414152.

Fleet Air Arm Fixed Wing Dinner: Tickets now available for the next biennial dinner at RNAS Yeovilton on October 29 starting at 19:30. Open to all serving and ex FAA fixed wing personnel. All ranks, rates and branches welcome. For further details please contact Tom Dawson at tom.dawson@agustawestland.com or tel: 07779 143627.

Weapons Mechanicians Association: Reunion October 21 to 23 at the Bear Hotel, Havant. For more details contact Dave Crees, 24 Leigh Road, Havant, Hants PO9 2ET or tel: 023 9247 5100 or mob: 07074 475100.

NOVEMBER 2011

Submarine Renown Association: 2011 reunion will take place in Leicester over the weekend of November 18 to 20. Further details: Tony Boyall at subrenown@ntlworld.com or tel: (0116) 2912195.

MAY 2012

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: Seeking new members to join us from both the cruiser and frigate. Wives/partners are also very welcome. We have 230 members and the subscriptions are only £6 per year. Our 27th AGM and reunion is being held at Babbacombe, Torquay, from May 11 to 14, 2012. If you are interested in joining the association then contact the secretary, Warwick Franklin at warwick.franklin@hotmail.com or tel: 01752 366611 or write to 127 Kit Hill Crescent, St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon PL5 1EL.

HMS Minerva Reunion: This will take place on May 18 at the Commissioner's House in the Historic Dockyard, Chatham, where there will be an afternoon reception followed by an opportunity for a less formal get-together in a local hostelry. For more information contact Barry Miller at barrymiller166@btinternet.com or tel: 020 8313 4190 (W) 01732 700633 (H).

HMS Broadsword Association: Biannual reunion and AGM will take place on May 26 in the WO & Senior rates mess HMS Drake Plymouth. Our president Captain Canning (Rtd) will be standing down at this reunion, we will also be marking the 30th anniversary of the Falkland's conflict. The reunion is open to anyone who served on Broadsword. For more information go to <http://www.hmsbroadsword.co.uk/> or contact Steve Bullock at Stevie.bullock@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01752 811206.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veterans-uk.info
RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, navysearhprc@tnt.co.uk
Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.rnmcc.org.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk
Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk

Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, www.seafarers-uk.org
SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafa.org.uk
RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk
Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org
Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com
Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk
RN Submarine Museum: 023 9251 0354, www.rnsubmus.co.uk
National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. P01 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot

be guaranteed.

■ Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.

■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial

work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

■ Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Sports lottery

June 18: £5,000 – LPT D R Heming; £1,500 – LH D R Bridle; £500 – PO P T Glover.

June 25: £5,000 – Lt Cdr D A Collins; £1,500 – AB1 J S Vass; £500 – CPO(A) R A Smith.

July 2: £5,000 – AB1 S D Stonehouse; £1,500 – Sgt P Allen; £500 – AB1 G J Morton.

July 9: £5,000 – Lt Cdr D J Thorne; £1,500 – LH V M Lamb; £500 – AB1 O L Olajemi.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file from Portsmouth Area Talking News. Contact 023 9269 0851 or email patn-rec@hotmail.com.

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underwater sensors use signature information to detect and classify targets is a must. If you're also familiar with use of MS Office packages, so much the better.

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Avonmouth show their true mettle

BRISTOL (Avonmouth) unit has held its RN Parade – and now members must hold their breath to see if they have regained a place amongst the elite.

“It’s an extremely important event, every bit as rigorous as an OFSTED inspection for a school,” said Lt (SCC) Barbara Hillier RNR, the unit’s CO.

“If we do really well, it’s a chance for the unit to re-obtain our 2008 burgee status, which is only held by the top ten per cent of Sea Cadet units.”

The unit claimed a pennant in 2010, awarded to the top 50 per cent of units nationally.

Cdr John Rees, the new South West Area Officer, inspected and spoke to the cadets, and enjoyed a simulated open-day event which allowed the youngsters to demonstrate their skills.

The evening concluded with the blessing and commissioning of the unit’s new Trinity 500 pulling boat, named Puffing Billy.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Alison Fowler RNR, the Avon District Officer, and her staff had already gone through the site with her staff, examining the facilities.

The 30 or so members of the unit are looking forward to a busy summer, including summer camp at Pier Cellars in Cornwall, a swimming gala and their Trafalgar Night dinner in October.

The youngsters will also be on duty at the Festival of Remembrance at Colston Hall.

Cumbrian pair are recognised

AN OFFICER and a cadet from Cumbria have been presented with awards to mark their contribution to the Corps.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Angela Menhams RNR received the Lord Lieutenant’s Certificate from Col Sir James Cropper for her work with Maryport unit and as Cumbria’s District Training Officer.

Lt Cdr Menhams’ citation noted that during her period of command TS Caesar became one of the most successful in the North West, twice winning the Stephenson Trophy, given to the top unit in each of the six areas of the UK.

They were also the first to win the national drill award.

POC Michael Lee, of Workington unit, received the Lord Lieutenant’s Certificate of Merit.

The top Sea Cadet in Cumbria, POC Lee’s citation described him as “an extremely reliable, mature and responsible young man” who has “excellent organisational and leadership skills.”

POC Lee was a member of the Sea Cadet platoon for the Cadet 150 Royal Review last year and has been chosen to attend a leadership course at Dartmouth.

Units fly the flag for Armed Forces Day

SEA and Marine Cadets the length and breadth of the country helped celebrate Armed Forces Day.

Young and old in Sussex came together to celebrate the contribution of the nation’s forces on Littlehampton seafront, with serving members, veterans and cadets attending a drumhead parade and service on the promenade before enjoying a packed programme of events.

The star of the show was a Royal Navy Lynx helicopter display by Lynx Mk 8, one of the fastest helicopters in the world and described by pilot Lt George Thompson, of 815 Naval Air Squadron, as “the sports car of the helicopter world.”

Wartime re-enactments, vintage military vehicles and an assault

course all featured in the event.

Cadets at Banbury took the opportunity to hold a first pre-parade meeting at their new unit, which is still being fitted out for their use.

They formed up in the Market Place at 11:20 before parading around the town together with the local Territorial Army detachment and the other cadet forces.

The parade was also joined by some serving members of the Armed Forces and a number of veterans.

The town’s new Mayor, Cllr Alastair Milne Home, took the salute.

Though the unit had no stall to man, before and after the parade cadets went around the town centre collecting for Help for Heroes.



● Stonehaven unit’s senior cadet POC Michael Smith (left) and LC Michael Blacklaw unfurl an Armed Forces Day flag at the harbour



Celebs mark birthday

AMANDA Holden, Simon Le Bon, Ben Fogle, Helen Skelton (above) and Royal cake maker Fiona Cairns are just some of the celebrities who voiced their support for Sea Cadets with birthday messages as it celebrated its 155th anniversary on June 25.

Cadets across the country baked a specially-designed cupcake recipe courtesy of Fiona Cairns – sticky toffee cupcakes with salted butter cream – and stars tweeted congratulations throughout the day.

Said TV presenter Barney Harwood (below), “What a fantastic organisation – anyone helping young people build their confidence gets my support. And I love your hats! Happy Birthday Sea Cadets!”

Presenter and world record kayaker Helen Skelton added: “Happy birthday to all of you! Delighted to be able to help you celebrate your anniversary. Keep up the good work.”

And adventurer and broadcaster Ben Fogle said: “Living life on the crest of a wave! Happy Birthday Sea Cadets!”



Forest of Dean cops a burgee

FOREST of Dean cadets are again on a high after their unit was judged one of the best in the country.

A unit’s annual inspection includes checks that safety and environmental issues are properly addressed and that the unit is achieving all it can for its cadets.

And the reward for a successful inspection is a prestigious burgee, handed out to the top 25 per cent of units in any area.

PO (SCC) Chris Toner said: “This award reflects the hard work and commitment from all the team at the unit, from the cadets, the instructional team, the parents and

supporters club and not forgetting the management committee.

“The unit is going from strength to strength, and if successful with our bid on the youth club building next door, we will soon be able to accept more young people to join.”

Instructor Graeme Terrell said: “We are all really pleased with the award. It helped that we have two brand-new Trinity 500 boats in which the cadets were able to gain valuable experience, and work together as a team.”

He added that female cadets from the unit won at the district pulling competition, and they are also representing the district in the regional canoeing event.

The unit recently won the Robert Nairac Award for dedication and hard work in the community; the award is named after the Army officer murdered in Northern Ireland in 1977.



● Former First Sea Lord Admiral the Lord West of Spithead and cadets at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire



● Forest of Dean cadets at their annual inspection

Thorne join Legion party

THORNE unit had a special role to play in the anniversary celebrations of their local Royal British Legion branch.

TS Gambia is formally affiliated to the Legion’s Thorne and District branch, and received an invitation to attend a 90th birthday parade and service at Wakefield Cathedral, attended by Legion members from across South and West Yorkshire.

Also in attendance were more than 30 standards, a number of mayors and the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Dr Ingrid Roscoe.

A group of 21 officers and cadets, led by Officer in Charge PO (SCC) David Redmile, attended from Thorne unit – by far the largest of any cadet force.

After the parade and service, the Lord Lieutenant was invited to review the Sea cadets, under the direction of Lt (SCC) Norman Knowles-Forrest RNR.

Dr Roscoe talked to each cadet about what they gained from being part of the Corps, with one member telling her that he eventually wanted to join the Royal Navy.

Canal is conquered

VOLUNTEERS from North West Area have paddled the length of the Caledonian Canal, raising more than £2,000 for charity.

The team, including five from the RM Cadets, travelled from Corpach to Inverness in three

Canadian canoes to boost the coffers of the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children’s Fund and NW Area Sea Cadets.

The weather was generally horrific – high winds, rain, sleet and hailstones with the odd splash of sunshine – and at times Loch

Lochy and Loch Ness resembled the open sea.

The team – Sgt Ryan Horsfield, A/Sgt Victor Moran, Sgt Matt Dickson, Sgt Glenn MacLennan, Lt Karl Hanrahan, Sgt Andy Edgar, WO2 Pete Bolton and Sgt Phil Proctor – had to camp on the banks of the lochs for the duration.

Brookbank Canoes of Stockport lent the intrepid paddlers canoes and safety equipment, while Ellesmere Port unit stumped up a minibus, trailer and fuel card.

VIP visitor

BURTON-on-Trent unit held their annual presentation under the watchful eye of Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar – the highlight of a busy year.

The Admiral and his wife were greeted by a Royal Marine Cadet guard, and during the evening Admiral Soar chatted to staff, cadets and family members.

The evening was rounded off by the distribution of annual awards, including the presentation of the Lord Lieutenant’s Award to LC Priestland, who was offshore at the time of the official ceremony and thus unable to receive his award.



Picture: Cpl Grant

Falkland Islands fillip

THE Falkland Islands unit has been presented with a cheque for £1,750 by the Mount Pleasant Complex Thrift Shop – the result of hard work and dedication by the volunteers who run the shop, which has so far raised over £6,000 for various charities in the 12 months since its opening.

Ken Newton, CO of TS Endurance, said the donation will be put towards a new minibus, giving cadets greater opportunities to travel around the islands.

Ken is pictured standing next to shop volunteers, while cadets (with the sum donated written on their hands) kneel in front of the cake stall – from left, MC Codey Newman, L/Cpl Keelen Fiddes, MCs Meghan and Harrison Law and AC Michaela Clifford.

Tribute to the fallen

A MEMORIAL plaque dedicated to all former Sea Cadets “who served the Corps or their country and who paid the ultimate sacrifice” has been unveiled by a former First Sea Lord at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

A quiet service was led by the padre of the North-West Area Sea Cadets on behalf of the Corps chaplain.

Members of the honour guard for the occasion were provided by the Sutton Coldfield and Tamworth and Lichfield branches.

Cadets then went on to take part in the dedication of the anchor of the now-dismantled landing ship RFA Sir Percivale, which will form a central feature of the Merchant Navy Convoy.

The Convoy is the largest

single site within the arboretum, consisting of 2,535 oak trees – one for each British merchant vessel lost during World War 2, though it also marks the sacrifices made by British mariners in other conflicts.

Outside the two world wars the greatest loss of life in the Merchant Navy in any one conflict was in the Falklands, when 19 people died, which is why Sir Percivale’s anchor was chosen – she took part in the conflict, and later served in the Gulf War of 1991 and in the Balkans.

The anchor, mounted on a plinth in the central glade, was dedicated during Seafarers Awareness Week, and took place on the anniversary of the bombing of Sir Percivale’s sister ships Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram, at Bluff Cove in 1982.



MBE for Ted of St Albans

AN instructor at St Albans unit was made an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

PO (SCC) Ted Hill (*above*) was recognised for "services to the voluntary sector in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and London over the past 30 years."

Ted, chief executive for Hillingdon Association for Voluntary Services, said: "This came as a surprise and I am both delighted and honoured – literally. 'I think such an award recognises the value and contribution of the voluntary sector as a whole.'"

A Sea Cadet volunteer for three years, Ted is St Albans unit's Training Officer and Boats Officer, specialising in teaching navigation and chart-work.

Cyrus is top cadet

LC CYRUS Fan has been installed as the top cadet in Greater Manchester.

At a special awards ceremony held at University Barracks, Cyrus, of Stockport unit, received his badge of office and certificate of appointment as Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester's Cadet from the man himself, Col Warren Smith.

The post is held in rotation by the three Service-linked youth movements, and the cadet's duties are to assist the Lord-Lieutenant at Service and youth-related functions in the county throughout the year – which is why the selected cadet is considered the best in the county.

According to his citation, Cyrus was chosen as he is "a role model to the younger Sea Cadets and he leads by example."

Right-hand man in place

STONEHAVEN cadet LC Michael Blacklaw has been presented with the Lord Lieutenant of Kincardineshire's award, sealing his position as the VIP's right-hand man during official ceremonies over the coming year.

Michael, who has qualified as Petty Officer Cadet, joined four years ago and contributes fully to all activities within the unit and beyond.

He is qualified in a range of disciplines, including first aid, communications, seamanship, boat-pulling, paddlesports, dinghy sailing, powerboating, swimming and expedition training and is working towards completion of his Bronze Duke Of Edinburgh Award.

Michael was also the coxswain of the national winning Boathandling Oars team when they wrested the title back from Portsmouth at the Corps National Combined Regatta last September.

Pride of New Romney

LC MELISSA Garside, of New Romney unit, has been given the honour of becoming one of the Lord Warden's Cadets.

The officer-in-charge of the unit, A/CPO (SCC) Alan Bell, said that the whole unit was very proud of and honoured by Melissa's appointment, which was



● The Cardiff unit field gun team in full flight

Peerless Cardiff win sixth Field Gun title

FOR the sixth year in succession Cardiff unit has taken home the Sea Cadet Corps Invitation Trophy in the Portsmouth Area Volunteer Cadet Corps Field Gun competition.

The competition, held at HMS Collingwood near Fareham in Hampshire, commemorates the fortitude of the Naval Brigades during the Boer War of 1899-1902 in South Africa, in which Naval guns were manhandled great distances over difficult terrain to

be used in action.

The competition requires crews of 19 cadets – boys and girls aged between ten and 18 (with crews having an average age of 14) to race against each other, manhandling and manoeuvring a seven-pounder field gun and

limber, weighing over 900lb in total, over a distance of 170 yards and carrying out a number of drills on the way.

These include bodily lifting the entire equipment, changing wheels over from gun to limber and vice-versa.

TS Cardiff finished third overall in the entire competition, in a new crew best competition time of 1m 12s.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery said afterwards that the speed, teamwork, bearing and discipline displayed by all the cadets were of an extremely high standard and a credit to each unit and corps they represented.



● Whitehaven cadets take temporary command of the tall ship Johanna Lucretia

Busy times for Whitehaven

WHITEHAVEN cadets have had a hectic time over the past few weeks, putting themselves through their paces for the Royal Navy as well as the wider public.

The unit's annual Royal Navy Parade was held in front of parents, friends and invited guests including Copeland's Mayor, Cllr John Jackson.

Area Officer Lt Col John Davies RM inspected the cadets before watching a series of presentations, the culmination of a series of visits by area staff based in Liverpool which examines all aspects of the unit's operation, from training and finance to community support and buildings maintenance.

After the parade, Lt Col Davies said: "It is always a pleasure to come to what is clearly a happy and motivated unit."

"There is a very positive and welcoming atmosphere

throughout."

Just three days later it was time to show the unit off at the Whitehaven Festival, when the youngsters visited various stands on the harbourside, had a crack at the Royal Marines' climbing wall and enjoyed behind-the-scenes tours of the tall ships and Liverpool University's Royal Naval Unit vessel, HMS Charger.

Cadets were also able to get out onto the water in two new sailing boats which had been loaned to them for the festival by Laser Performance.

Unit CO Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR said: "We have two Laser Picos and we are delighted that

the company decided to work in partnership with us at the festival.

"Our cadets had great fun on the water and were able to try out two new types of boat as well."

The following day the unit took part in a major military parade on the first anniversary of being granted the Freedom of the Borough of Copeland.

Unit chairman Chas Tinkler said: "I have never seen our unit so busy."

"As well as our own cadets we had visiting Sea Cadets from Workington, Army and Air Cadets, serving members of the Navy, Army and Air Force and a large contingent of veterans."

Swansea team to the rescue

SEA Cadets from Swansea unit helped rescue a man who was struggling to stay afloat in the River Tawe.

The cadets were members of the unit's pulling teams and had gone to the river to practise for the Sea Cadets district pulling competition.

They were alerted to the plight of the man, who was close to the sail bridge by Swansea Marina, by people shouting from the nearby Tawe Lock.

According to a report in the local paper, the *South Wales Evening Post*, PO Rhodri Thomas said: "We were getting onto the water and people from the Tawe lock gate shouted to us and asked if we could assist

with the man, so one of the crews and I raced up to the sail bridge.

"One of our rowing boats was already out on the water and had got there first, and the crew had managed to pull him into the boat and got him to the side of the river."

PO Thomas said cadets had been involved in a similar incident last year when a man jumped from the sail bridge.

Unit CO Lt Cdr (SCC) Bill Davies RNR said he was proud of the way his cadets reacted.

Paramedics checked the man at the marina pontoon, but he did not require hospital treatment.

Fleetwood boss given certificate

THE Commanding Officer of Fleetwood unit has been awarded the only Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for Lancashire during a ceremony in Blackburn.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Dennis Archbold RNR was put forward for the honour because of his devotion and dedication in training cadets to a high standard, with Fleetwood members winning national and local awards.

"In spite of a battle with cancer, he continues to provide dedicated and professional service, being a role model for his peers and subordinates alike," said the citation.

"His superb service has been inspirational to cadets and adults."

A member of the Blackpool unit was also in the spotlight during the event, at the Somme Barracks.

LC Lee Timothy was honoured with the award for the county's top Sea Cadet – the Lord-Lieutenant's Certificate of Merit.

Lee's citation detailed his skills in instruction and his being a role model for sportsmanship and leadership qualities.

"He holds a football coaching certificate, referees and indoor climbing qualifications," the citation stated.

"He is an excellent sailor and has competed in four national competitions and passed a six-week course as a trainee instructor at the Weymouth National Boating Station."

"He is a superb cadet and a great credit to his Corps, his community and his family."

Presently studying for A levels at Blackpool Sixth Form College, Lee hopes for a career with the Royal Marines, following the footsteps of his father, Maj Emile Timothy.



● Southwark cadets at the memorial gardens in Catford

London units join HMS Hood service

OF the 1,415 men who died in the sinking of HMS Hood, at least 30 are known to have come from the Greater London area, several of whom are believed to have called South East London their home.

After the war a memorial to these particular Londoners was created by Ray Raymont, but over the decades it fell into disrepair.

But in the 21st century it was rediscovered, restored and, in 2007, rededicated.

The Battlecruiser HMS Hood South East London Memorial Group held its annual parade and service in the Memorial Gardens at Bellingham, Catford.

Cadets from Southwark, Greenwich, Beckenham,

Bromley and Merton units took part, with the guard and platoon co-ordinated by Deputy District Officer Philippa Torbett.

The Mayor of Greenwich, Cllr Jim Gillman, and London Southern District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) David Lewis RNR, took the salute.



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SEA CADETS

Maldon sail to success

THE 2011 London Area sailing competition came to an exciting finish – and when all the results were in it was Maldon unit sailors who were wearing the broadest smiles.

The competition encompasses three separate events – a 24-hour sailing contest in late April, the Jutland Trophy series in May and a final round at the Welsh Harp Boating Station in London.

The 24-hour event saw the field using Bosun dinghies instead of the larger, more stable ASCs, requiring higher levels of concentration – especially when the wind strengthens and youngsters are fighting fatigue.

The Jutland Trophy was a Portsmouth Yardstick handicap-adjusted series of races, which saw Toppers, Bosuns, Picos, Laser 2000s and an RS Vision going head-to-head.

Racing at the Welsh Harp station saw single-handers, Bosuns and the RS Feva fleet, and although it was nip-and-tuck, the Eastern District unit prevailed, building on their Junior sailing win last year.

Maldon CO CPO (SCC) Nick Temme said: "I'm incredibly proud of our sailors this year and this achievement shows how the cadets and staff are committed to sailing at Maldon."

"We hope to open as an RYA Training Centre in the future, which will only add to the opportunities we can offer our cadets in Eastern District."

CO will go extra mile

THE CO of Kettering unit has been presented with the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for Exceptional Service during the Colours ceremony at the unit's HQ.

Lt (SCC) Marc Pether RMR was handed his certificate by District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Paul Perry RNR.

Lt Pether was recommended for this award in recognition of his achievements since joining the Sea Cadets in 1998; gaining many qualifications and obtaining several promotions to become CO at Kettering in January following a period as Officer in Charge.

It is generally acknowledged that Lt Pether goes way beyond what is expected of him, be it running with new initiatives, encouraging growth and achievement of staff and cadets, as unit Bandmaster or numerous other tasks he undertakes.



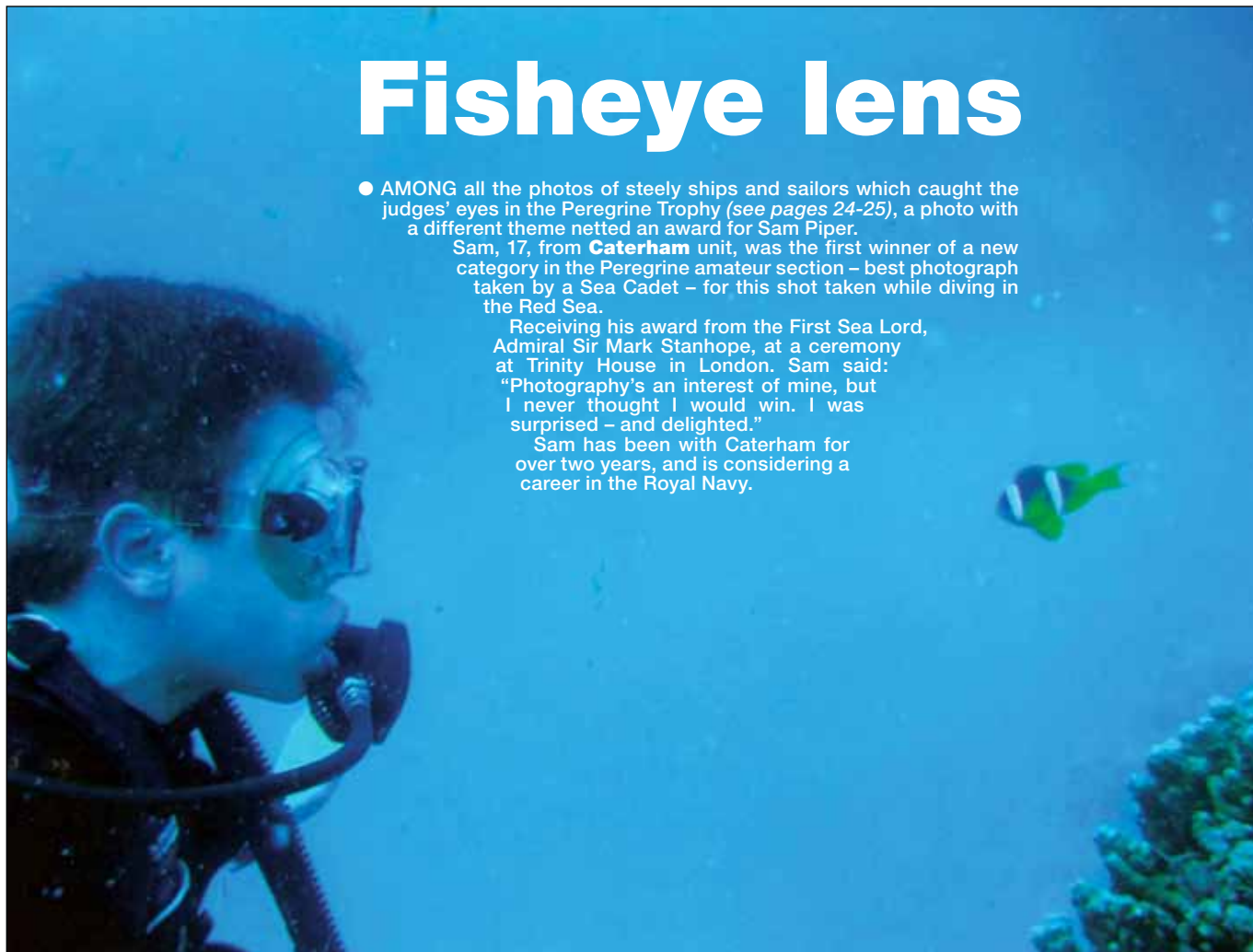
● Warpsite Old Boys (from left) Eddie Symonds, Philip Okill and Joe Ashbolt

Old Boys gather again

NUMBERS may be dwindling, but a handful of Warpsite Old Boys still made it to their annual reunion in London – all are now into their nineties.

The event was hosted by the Marine Society, as the Warpsite in question was one of a succession of training ships loaned to the world's first seafarers' charity by the Admiralty, starting in 1786.

The final Warpsite, like her predecessors, was moored on the



Fisheye lens

● AMONG all the photos of steely ships and sailors which caught the judges' eyes in the Peregrine Trophy (see pages 24-25), a photo with a different theme netted an award for Sam Piper.

Sam, 17, from Caterham unit, was the first winner of a new category in the Peregrine amateur section – best photograph taken by a Sea Cadet – for this shot taken while diving in the Red Sea.

Receiving his award from the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, at a ceremony at Trinity House in London. Sam said: "Photography's an interest of mine, but I never thought I would win. I was surprised – and delighted."

Sam has been with Caterham for over two years, and is considering a career in the Royal Navy.

Hectic spell for London divers

THE London Area Dive Team has had a busy start to their year with dive shows, celebrity support and a full range of courses.

The team were given a stand at the Big Scuba Show at Olympia, organised by the British Sub Aqua Club.

As the charity promoted was the Commando Challenge, there were Royal Marines, past, present and – from the team's own cadets – future represented.

The cadets' raffle raised enough money to buy some kit for the team, and the draw was kindly done by Monty Halls, a former Royal Marine himself and host of

TV's *Great Ocean Adventures* and most recently, *Monty Halls' Great Hebridean Escape*.

Another event took the ASO London Diving, S/Lt (SCC) Rob Waterfield RNR, to a preview of Britain's *Secret Seas* BBC TV programme with Paul Rose, a former Antarctic base commander who has spent a lifetime scuba diving.

The wonderful surroundings of the Clothworkers Hall in the City of London made for a suitably impressive venue.

Mr Rose recognised the team

from previous events, and gave his full endorsement of the dive team, giving the 'OK' dive signal.

Courses have been fully and oversubscribed in the London Area.

The first Ocean Diver course saw all students pass successfully, the final weekend being spent at the Wraysbury dive centre near Heathrow Airport.

The most recent activities include a trip to Brighton Marina for diving in a training facility there, and the completion of a Sports Diver course.

Stars of Stewartry

STEWARTRY unit held their annual awards ceremony at the same time as their AGM – an ideal opportunity to reward all who excelled throughout a busy year.

The main awards for 2011 were as follows:

Ardent Trophy: LC Archie Frost; Senior Cadet of the Year: LC William McLean; Junior Cadet of the Year: Cdt Lachlan Waddell; Captain's Cup: AC

Dean McMasters; Captain's Cup (Junior): JC Jodie Roberts; 1st Lt's Award: LC Connor Gillan; Junior Cadet: JC Callum Johnstone; Sirco Trophy: AC Tom Ryan; Sailing Trophy: LJC Findlay Johnstone; Engineering Trophy: LC Connor Gillan; Seamanship Trophy: Cdt Rebecca Hayton; AT Trophy: LC Archie Frost; Sports Cup: LC Jean Irving; Divisional Trophy: Cochrane Division.

Methil juniors call in at emergency centre

JUNIOR cadets from Methil unit enjoyed a visit to the Fife Constabulary Force Call Centre to see what happens when a member of the public phones the police.

Evelyn Lavery, of Fife Constabulary, spoke to the visitors about the centre and how it operates, and cadets were shown the 999 desk and watched staff answering emergency calls.

"Visiting the emergency services is really important and the cadets really enjoyed themselves," said PO Kevin Ralph.

"Allowing the cadets to become more confident about using the phone in an emergency and being able to pass on the right information can be invaluable."

Ms Lavery said: "The cadets were wonderful – very polite and lots of questions."

"It was really good to have them visit the call centre."

Beccles splashes out



BECCLES cadets have been getting out and about in recent months, taking part in a wide range of activities including sailing, pulling and power boating.

But for many the highlight was a trip to the Cardington Artificial Slalom Course near Bedford, where they got the chance to test their nerve and skill at whitewater kayaking.

The centre is based round a dual-purpose 120m concrete channel, which is both a flood control channel for the adjacent Great River Ouse and a training and competition course for watersports – fibreglass boulder-shaped obstacles create the white water.

A dozen cadets, eight members of staff and four members of the unit management committee went on the weekend, sleeping under canvas at the local Scout site.

During the weekend, all the cadets attempted the course (see left) – and as their confidence increased, so did the level of difficulty.

Displays follow meeting

ROSYTH unit hosted the successful AGM of the Sea Cadet Association in Scotland.

Some 37 members attended the meeting, at MOD Caledonia, as well as Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor and new joint Business Management Director Stuart Dell.

The organisation's accounts showed a "reasonable level of available funds", but it was noted only 14 or so of the 37 Scottish units tend to apply for assistance.

Renewed efforts would be made, through Sea Cadet Association in Scotland Liaison Officers where possible, to encourage other units to seek assistance.

There was a lively discussion on the initiative which would see five years of free associate membership for Sea Cadets approaching the age of 18 – an objective raised by branch chairmen on several occasions in the past five years as a chance to maintain interest and thereby increase longer-term.

Delegates were told it was hoped that new branch websites, once established, would significantly raise the profile of the organisation.

The meeting was followed by a fundraising event for members and invited guests, at which the Sea Cadet Northern Area Band performed, Rosyth laid on a demonstration, followed by the Northern Area drill team and the RN Presentation Team.

POC Gemma Harper, of Musselburgh unit, was presented with her Sea Cadet Association in Scotland Award for being adjudged the best cadet north of the border.

In addition to her certificate, she receives a voucher for a week's voyage in TS Royalist or one of the other offshore training vessels.

The trip voucher is provided through the generosity of E G Thomson (Holdings) Ltd, successor to the Ben Line.

Gemma will become an adult instructor at Leith unit on reaching the age of 18 regarded by those who gathered at Caledonia as progression of the best order.

RMVCC help the wounded

THE Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet Corps based at CTCRM were set a mission – raise as much as you can for the Royals' Help Our Wounded (HOW) campaign.

And despite sweltering temperatures, the cadets turned out smartly at the B&Q Superstore in Exeter and brought in £814.44.

HOW is the fundraising arm of the Royal Marines Association, formed in March this year to help with seriously-injured Royals returning from operational tours.

It aims to raise £6m by October 2014 – the 350th anniversary of the Corps.



● TWO special parade nights were arranged at Weston-super-Mare unit to ease the path between the old drill rifles and the new. Armed drill nights attracted a record attendance of 63 cadets, the first to bid farewell to the old DP .303 rifles (pictured above), then two weeks later to welcome the new SA80s



The strain of war at sea

IN A month when Britain's most senior sailor says the nation needs awakening from its slumber when it comes to awareness of the sea, rewind to the dark days of September 1941.

It looked like the Germans were on the verge of overrunning the Soviet Union, Tobruk was invested, relations with Japan were spiralling uncontrollably towards war, and the 'grey wolves' of the U-boat force threatened to strangle Britain's sea lanes.

The chroniclers, commentators and monitors of the Mass Observation movement set out to discover 'civilian attitudes to the Navy compared with the RAF and Army'.

They recorded sentiments which would find echoes today. "The Navy is doing a tremendous job with its usual silence and courage," one interviewee said. Sailors, another told the MO, did "lots of dull, dangerous work bravely and well." One person questioned put it simply: "I know no sailors, but I think they are heroic."

The Mass Observation report concluded that the British people admired the Royal Navy but had little understanding of what they did.

Sir Max Hastings' impending tome on WW2 is due to argue that the Senior Service was the nation's most effective fighting arm between 1939 and 1945.

A similar argument is made by Glyn Pryor in *Citizen Sailors: The Royal Navy in the Second World War* (Penguin, £25 ISBN 978-0670918546), which uses diaries (kept against regulations by many men), letters, memoirs, oral history and contemporary documents to tell the RN's wartime 'story' through the eyes of the men who were there.

In doing so he does not merely cover the 'set piece' actions – the Atlantic convoys (pictured above), the Bismarck chase, the

sinking of the Scharnhorst – nor merely focus on the Surface Fleet; the often-overlooked role of the Submarine Service in particular is not ignored here.

And while the popular image of a wartime sailor might be Jolly Jack, carefree alongside, stolid, redoubtable reliable at sea, the reality is rather bleaker.

For many the Mediterranean in 1941 and 1942 were possibly the darkest hours in modern RN history, in particular the pounding the ships took from the Luftwaffe.

"Everybody became a bit bomb happy," recalled Arthur Jones, a Royal Marine serving aboard battleship HMS Warspite which was damaged off Crete. "We were getting so ragged it became a punishable offence to slam a hatch because it jarred the nerves so much."

The nerves of as many as 30 men aboard HMS Ajax – victor of the River Plate – cracked after five weeks at sea and almost constant air attacks. She put into harbour for 48 hours, her men were addressed by Admiral Cunningham – who threatened to hang any ring-leaders from the cruiser's own yard arm, but still four men jumped overboard when Ajax put to sea again. Cunningham did not hang them – but they were jailed for three years.

Most sailors looked upon shipmates who broke with sympathy – for they realised the time-honoured saying 'there but for the grace of God' applied.

"The nervous strain simply grows and grows until you have to exert all your will power to stop yourself from appearing jittery or nervous," wrote one sailor. "That is courage – the quality of being able to keep from showing your fear in the face of nervous strain."

Indeed, one thing which shines through

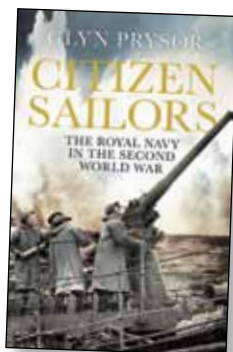
in this excellent book is the daily physical and mental burden on the ordinary sailor in WW2 – whatever the theatre of war: fear of death, fear of being wounded, shipwrecked, concerns about loved ones at home.

While attitudes had clearly improved from a generation before when the military refused to concede 'shell shock' existed, there was a reluctance to accept that long periods at sea, defence watches, battle – combined the RN's chief psychiatric consultant called them 'operational strain' – was as much of a factor as an individual's inherent weaknesses.

Not a few good men broke down, among them Philip Rambaut, a senior engineer aboard HMS Grenville, who collapsed when another ship in his group was sunk. "The strain of four years of war was beginning to have its effect on me. I was able to perform my duties satisfactorily but our doctor noticed that I was unable to relax, walking up and down a great deal and showing irritability."

What Pryor also shows clearly is that, however diverse the backgrounds of the men of the Royal Navy between 1939 and 1945 – regulars, reservists, submariners, Fleet Air Arm – there was a common nautical bond linking them. They felt the loss of every ship, whether in the same convoy or whether they were half a world away: Royal Oak, Courageous, Rawalpindi, the Mighty Hood.

And when the boot was on the other foot, some sailors felt revulsion at wiping out the German invasion fleet bound for Crete – one called it "a massacre – bits of boat and bits of German flew into the air. Not a pleasant sight by any means". Others felt no pity as the Bismarck went down just days later a couple of thousand miles away.



1940 and all that

WHEN the hardback of James Holland's *The Battle of Britain: Five Months that Changed History May-October 1940* appeared last year we rather liked it because for once it didn't write the RN out of proceedings in 1940.

Indeed, it is a much more holistic look at the clash between the British Empire and the Third Reich throughout the late spring and summer of 1940, rather than simply a clash between the RAF and Luftwaffe, featuring the Senior Service's role at Dunkirk and coastal convoys among other critical episodes.

The book's now out in paperback (Corgi, £8.99 ISBN 978-0552156103) and we have two copies to give away to readers.

To win, tell us the name of the plan for the German invasion of Britain in 1940 – we'll take either the German or the English translation as the correct answer.

Send your entry to bbob@navynews.co.uk or Battle of Britain Competition, Navy News, Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH.

Entries must be received by mid-day on Monday September 12 2011. The normal competition rules apply.

The appliance of (military) science

COMMODORE Steven Jermy is a recently retired Naval officer with a distinguished career both afloat and ashore.

He has served in the Ministry of Defence on the Directorate of Policy Planning and as Principal Staff Officer to the Chief of Defence Staff.

His final operational appointment was as Strategy Director to the British Embassy in Kabul in 2007.

He has developed a strong reputation as an intellectual officer and this is confirmed by his important book *Strategy for Action: Using Force Wisely in the 21st Century* (Knightstone, £9.99 ISBN 978-1-908134-00-4).

It is clear that Cdre Jermy is dissatisfied with the strategic underpinnings of the recent wars with which he has been involved, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

This is brought out both by Maj Gen Julian Thompson's excellent foreword and the author's introduction where he makes clear the uncertainty he felt flying into Kabul in 2007, "uncertainty borne on what I sensed to be a lack of strategy."

Quoting Clausewitz, the greatest philosopher of war whose timeless work acts as the sound foundation of Jermy's work: "No-one starts a war – or rather no-one in his right senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."

Strategy, Jermy argues, has to answer the 'how' question: "how a state or coalition will fight a war and then guide the actions of its forces once operations begin."

The wars of the current era, for the time being at least, have been

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wars of choice, reflecting issues of national security. In such wars, the book argues, there is "less excuse to begin operations without having first done the thinking." However, its author suggests, in the post-Cold War period this thinking has not been carried out.

"Operations have followed paths different from those envisaged by political and military leaders. At times, our strategies have seemed unclear or faulty or both. Why has this been so?"

Afghanistan confirmed this lack of true strategic thinking and, on further enquiry, Jermy found that, despite the large amount of writing that could be broadly called 'strategic', there was "no substantive body of modern knowledge on the art of strategy making," which he defines as, "the intellectual art of creating strategy and the practical art of executing strategy."

The commodore goes far to fill the gap with this book. He sets out both "to provide a theory for those who must create and exercise strategy" and also "insights to all with a general interest in strategy and the use of armed force in operations and war."

His approach is soundly historical, beginning with a short consideration of 'The Nature of War and Strategy' and then a longer section on the 'Insights' of those who have tried to explain it in its various epochs, Classical, Industrial and Modern.

The last-named section has a very valid critique of much contemporary military doctrine which, the author correctly argues,

suffers from "fashion and fad." He does not, however, throw out the baby with the bathwater, and similarly he usefully draws on corporate business strategy to provide other useful insights.

Part Three moves on to 'Theory' beginning with an analysis of the current strategic context from 1991, the period that Jermy rightly calls that of the 'Information transformation'. Happily he begins by quoting my former, much-respected, colleague Prof Colin Gray that one should not prematurely write off old fashioned state-versus-state war; "it is the fate of optimistic prophets to be perpetually disappointed."

Nevertheless, as Cdre Jermy argues, "the usefulness of armed forces designed for conventional conflict is somewhat more variable in... (the) less conventional forms of conflict" of today.

The author argues that Islamist extremism is likely to remain a major threat but then sadly shows his commitment to the current secular religion of 'carbon warmism' to argue, fashionably, that 'climate change' will be an important factor in providing strategic context. I shall join my fellow sceptic Julian Thompson in ignoring this uncharacteristically weak part of an otherwise thoughtful book.

The author then moves on to the key chapters, 'the heart of the matter', on 'making strategy', 'thinking about thinking' and 'thinking about war'. In the latter chapter Cdre Jermy introduces the interesting idea of 'Balance of

Power' versus 'Balance of Passion', the latter being the emotional commitment of, for example a people seeing an alien army trampling over their homeland.

There next follows one of the most intelligent discussions I have read on attack versus defence, attrition versus manoeuvre, sequential versus cumulative, direct approach versus indirect (followers of Liddell-Hart are warned, they might be shocked!) and symmetrical versus asymmetrical. The solution, Cdre Jermy wisely argues, is an instinctive combination of the different dialectics.

The book goes on to discuss the frameworks for thinking of strategy for action, using the familiar 'commander's estimate' as a possible template for analysis at the higher, strategic level.

The final section tries to turn theory on 'Practice' into a 'politico-military school' of strategy making. The author examines strategy-making in coalition "complex and frustrating but also the norm" using 'coalition' to cover domestic joint interactions as well as combined international coalitions with allies. He next emphasises the crucial dimension of time and how this can be used to be 'reactive', or 'responsive' before moving on to a discussion of 'culminations' in contests which uses Clausewitz's concept of the 'culminating point' in an original and fruitful way.

Finally Cdre Jermy leaves the reader with thoughts on "how we in the West could improve the way we make strategy." He concludes



that "if the theory presented in this book helps those creating and executing strategy do so in a more organised and disciplined way, my work will be done."

As Gen Thompson said in the introduction, it is to be hoped that members of the new National Security Council will absorb the lessons set out so clearly in this truly excellent, stimulating and groundbreaking book.

I suspect, however, from performance so far, that is asking a little too much. Never has the term 'Strategic' been more devalued than in the recent so called 'Strategic Defence and Security Review'.

For those with more open minds and greater intellects I can do nothing more than recommend most highly Steve Jermy's masterpiece.

At £9.99 I can think of no more exceptional value in publishing for a very long time. It is a quite brilliant work and I enjoyed every page.



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Hiro's heroics not enough

PRINCE Harry helped the Army polo team to victory over the Navy at this year's Rundle Cup, snatching the trophy back from the Senior Service.

A capacity crowd of around 4,000 spectators in the grounds of Tedworth House in Tidworth garrison saw Harry Wales bag the first goal less than two minutes after the start.

Despite some strong play by the Navy, who began the match with a 1½ point handicap lead, the Army team, led by Lt Colonel Nick Hunter, pulled ahead and won with a final score of 8-5½.

From the RN's viewpoint, up-and-coming star S/Lt Hiro Suzuki and veteran Cdr Richard Mason particularly impressed.

In other events at Tidworth, the Combined Services team scraped a victory over the visiting United States (Eastern Circuit) in the Indian Cavalry Officers Polo Trophy match.

In complete contrast, model and TV personality Katie Price (aka Jordan) took part in a fun celebrity polo match in aid of INSPIRE, the Salisbury-based charity which fights the effects of spinal cord injury by researching the latest medical and mechanical technology.

Also participating in the three-chukka match which included one of bicycle polo, was her partner Leandro Penna, *Silent Witness* actor Tom Ward and jockeys Richard Johnson and Andrew Thornton. Ms Price's team won by 5 goals to 3.

Access all 'aria

A TEAM of four staff officers from Britannia Royal Naval College represented the Senior Service in the Army's 2011 **Alpine Challenge** – a 100-kilometre trek on foot, on bike and in canoe across Bavaria.

Thirty teams, mainly from infantry regiments, competed in the two-day challenge, with the BRNC quartet of Surg Lt Cdr Anthony Dew, Lt Cdrs Harry Harrington and Alan Youp and Capt Chris Burr RM the sole Royal Navy representatives.

The competition, staged at Wertach between Lake Constance and Munich, is a tri-Service event which tests the physical and mental strength of military personnel, pushing their endurance levels to the limit.

It hones essential skills such as leadership and map reading, enhancing an individual's ability to withstand the rigours of operations and rapid deployments.

"The first test was the 18-hour road trip to get to the Training Centre in Wertach!" said Lt Cdr Youp.

"The actual event started at 5am on the Saturday. The Bavarian scenery was stunning but we had no time to appreciate it as there were ten check points to pass through over the 30-mile course, with a maximum of 12 hours in which to do it."

The first day of the challenge features a 50km/30-mile orienteering event over very steep terrain, including having to climb up to 2,000m on two occasions.

The second day began at 6am with a 25km cycle ride, then 500m paddle in a canoe and finally a 25km run to close things.

"Day two was particularly enjoyable," said Surg Lt Cdr Dew. "The fatigue was evident as we transitioned between the stances, we all had our moments but came through as a team."

Displaying courage and commitment they finished 17th at the end of the first day and crossed the line tenth at the end of day two, with an overall competition place of 13th.

"The Alpine Challenge was one of the toughest and most arduous physical events I have ever done," said Lt Cdr Harrington.

"It was a fantastic experience for us all. We would all recommend it – with the advice to train wisely carrying 20lbs of food, water and kit. I'm looking forward to taking some more teams from Dartmouth next year."



THE Royal Tournament Service Showjumping Event takes place at Animal Defence Centre, Melton Mowbray, and is run over for four days with a variety of classes at different levels and heights.

The senior classes give the top eight competitors the opportunity to compete in the Services Class in Olympia later in the year, *writes Lt Sharon Brown.*

This year the Royal Navy fielded a five-strong team: Lt Cdr Vic Sollitt with Prim (Prim and Proper the Princess), Lt Cdr Suzanne Clarke with Rabbit (you should see the ears!), Lt Stephen Currie with Bob (*pictured*), CPO Wayne Leatham with Charlie and LPT Kelly Gooch with Bertha (yes she is big!).

All personnel transported themselves and their trusty steeds a considerable distance from as far as Faslane and the south west to Leicestershire – exhausting for both parties.

Lack of Service accommodation at the Defence Animal Centre required the team to camp in tents or lorries on site and welcoming the availability of showers in the gymnasium.

Day one and the team were up at 6.30am to tend to their horses' needs before breakfast.

The first competition of the day was the Services class – show jumps at approx 90cm with 47 competitors, including Vic, Suzanne and Kelly for the RN.

The team jumped well, with only one unlucky pole down for Suzanne in the first round; Vic had a fast jump-off against the clock but had one pole down and Kelly went safe and steady to achieve a clear in the jump-off. Final rosette results for the RN: Kelly second and Vic fifth.

The Princess Anne Cup consisted of 11 show jumps at approx 1.05m high with a tricky course including some sharp turns.

The RN contingent comprised Vic, Suzanne, Wayne and Kelly and the course proved a challenge for all, with very few clears from the 40 competitors. Wayne with Charlie achieved a sixth place for their quickest time with fewest faults.

The final class of the day was the Prince of Wales Cup – over a meaty course at approx 1.10m high – with just 15 entries.

This was also the first class in which competitors could gain qualifying points for the Services Jumping Class at Olympia.

The RN entry was Stephen with

Stephen and Posh Bob Olympia-bound



Bob, the last competitor to enter the ring. He jumped a great round and only knocked one fence down. Despite the four faults, Stephen was placed seventh and awarded some points towards qualifying for Olympia.

Day Two, another early rise and once all domestics were complete, focus switched to the Team Showjumping class.

Teams required three riders, and since the RN had five, they formed a second 'Joint' team with an Army rider.

The RN team comprised Vic, Suzanne and Stephen, while the 'joint venture' squad was made up of Wayne, Kelly and a ranker from the Royal Logistics Corps who had borrowed an Army horse.

Team RN saw Stephen go clear and fast, Vic had a solid round, just unluckily clipping one fence.

However, the experienced duo of Suzanne and Rabbit had a very uncharacteristic sharp stop at the first which ejected Suzanne out the saddle into the fence and prematurely finished their round. Fortunately, both horse and rider were unhurt and Suzanne remounted and jumped a few confidence-giving fences before retiring for the day.

The 'Joint Venture' team began with the Army rider – and sadly her horse didn't appear to be fitted with brakes.

After the first two fences, the horse decided to take charge and proceeded to gallop several circuits of the arena before his rider could regain control and consequently was eliminated.

Kelly with Bertha were up next and jumped a lovely clear round followed by Wayne with Charlie who had one unlucky fence down. The class proved how unpredictable horses can be.

The King's Cup is another Olympia qualifying class with wide fences at approx 1.15m high, not

surprisingly there were only 11 competitors for this challenging course.

The only RN entry in the class was Stephen with his eye on the main prize of gaining more points for Olympia qualification.

He jumped a great round with only one fence down and managed to secure a place in the jump-off.

Olympia points in his sights.... the whole RN team were behind Stephen and Bob as they entered the ring for the jump-off.

No-one yet was clear, Stephen stormed round the course at speed, cutting corners and finishing clear to cheers from the RN team.

Stephen had set the bar high, but one competitor managed to raise their game and just pipped his time. Stephen and Bob finished a very honourable second – and more importantly gained nine more points towards the big prize a possible place at Olympia.

The six-bar competition is a fun class similar to *La Puissance* (The Wall) where the height of the fences is raised each round and competitors are knocked out if they knock any down.

The first round started at a mere 80cm and after the recently jumped higher fences the challenge would be to ensure the horses respected the smaller height.

The first, second and third rounds saw all RN riders clear. For the fourth round the height was set at a respectable 1.10-1.15m, but both Suzanne and Kelly were knocked out.

In the final fifth round there were only two riders left: Vic and Prim for the RN and for the RAF Ft Lt Hale.

First to go was the flier, who jumped well but the gasps from the crowd highlighted the two fences that fell.

All that stood between first-place success for the RN with Vic

and Prim were six fences.

The RN team captain was cool under pressure and sailed round the course, only brushing one fence and thus landing a very well-earned victory.

The final RN placings were: Vic first, Kelly fifth and Suzanne – recovering well from her fall the previous day – took sixth position.

Day three was derby day with the junior event first – a lengthy course with 22 fences at approx 1.05 high.

It was Kelly and Bertha's first ever attempt at a derby and for a combination who have only been together for three months, this was a considerable challenge. The pair knocked four fences and Bertha was unsure about jumping the ditch so stopped to have a look and incurred a refusal.

Wayne jumped well, only knocking two fences down and secured sixth place.

Vic and Prim jumped a very tidy and quick clear round to take third – another two rosettes for the Navy squad.

The final class of the event was the senior derby which again consisted of 22 fences at a height of 1.15m-1.20m with wide jumps and cross-country fences.

Not surprisingly, this challenging course only attracted 15 competitors, with Stephen and Bob (posh name Cur-O-Lea Bobi) flying the flag for the RN.

Currently serving at RAF Shawbury, Stephen joined the RNRMEA showjumping and eventing team in February 2011 with his homebred Irish sports horse.

Entering the ring for the senior derby, Stephen was very aware that a place at the London International Horse Show Olympia was in his grasp – a lifelong dream of his.

Across the class there were eliminations and many faults with fallen fences. Stephen and Bob jumped a confident and aggressive round which saw them land fourth place overall – and gain more points towards Olympia qualification.

After a short wait, there was confirmation that Stephen and Bob had secured their place at the coveted London International Horse show in the Services Cup later this year.

Overall, a fantastic week demonstrating that the RN equestrian team are still holding their own and delivering some excellent results.

Stephen and Bob are blogging in the run-up to Olympia (Bobs' doing most of the work...). Read more at www.royalnavyquestrian.co.uk/rnm-news/riderblog.html

Different countries, different fortunes

HMS Portland's rugby side – the Ospreys – answered all their critics by putting Dutch side Den Helder to the sword when the two sides faced off during the frigate's visit to the Netherlands.

The ship was representing the UK at Netherlands Navy Days – which also allowed for some sporting relief. The match (*action pictured right*) began at a high tempo with big hits and smooth passing being the order of the day for Portland.

The first points were not long in coming, and they came off a wonderfully-worked forwards move. LS Blackhurst was the inspiration behind a great lineout which allowed AB (CIS) Newton to break off from a maul to score the first try of the game, setting the tone for the rest of the match.

Portland's offloading from the tackle meant they were firmly in control of the match and exploited gaps in the opposition defence to further their lead.

By the end of the first period no fewer than five Ospreys had grabbed tries in an effort to put the game beyond the reach of the Dutch.

In a match where the visitors were so

dominant and the tries so elaborate and frequent it is unfortunate not to mention every scorer in detail, but with AB(CIS) Newton expertly marshalling the game from fly half ET (ME)s Burger, Smith and Binns all got their name on the scoresheet.

The Dutch only breached Portland's defences twice, but both times F79 responded and turned the screw on Den Helder.

Having struggled against their previous opposition, the Ospreys' coach LS 'Taff' Stedman was delighted to lead the celebrations at the final score of 46-12 to the Brits.

Meanwhile in the USA... Playing in near-100°F heat, HMS Dauntless' rugby team took on the mighty Virginia Beach Club in a memorable encounter while the destroyer was alongside in Norfolk.

The game was split into quarters with rolling substitutes to allow for frequent breaks and water.

Dauntless had little match practice with a busy ship's programme during the second half of the season.

Drawing on a reasonable-sized squad, the Brits performed admirably in front of a

sizeable crowd drawn from the ship and locals.

The first 15 minutes were a torrid affair as both sides grappled for supremacy.

VB asserted their first phase dominance – demonstrating good lineout skills and a large well-drilled pack made it difficult for Dauntless to win decent possession in the scrum, even off their own ball.

Dauntless held their own for a good proportion of the game in the lineout, securing good ball from front jumper LPT Stu Brown.

However, VB's forward dominance allowed them to run in a few tries from out wide.

Dauntless team captain LS 'Taff' Burke led his side with purpose making a number of powerful runs deep into the opposition 22.

He was well supported by his fellow forwards with Lt Simon Preece, LET 'Butch' Parr and AB 'Gaz' Firth performing particularly well.

Scrum half AB Sam Watt and fullback Lt 'Vinnie' Vuniwaqa made maximum use of the few opportunities they were given to gain ground.

The 45s never gave up and PO 'Hoss' Cartwright bagged a consolation try as the visitors went down 31-5.



Things go all Wight for kayakers

THE Royal Navy **Kayak** Association teamed up with the Portsmouth Region Adventurous Training Centre and HMS Temeraire for a weekend Joint Service Sea Kayaking expedition to the Isle of Wight.

The flotilla of sea kayaks was made up from a broad spectrum of Service personnel including Cdre Wayne Keble (MOD), Cpl Liffen Gordon (RM Chivenor) and Pilot Officer Oli Hymas (RAF Wyton).

In total there were 15 participants including three instructors. The demand for places far outstripped the available instructors and is evidence for the growing popularity of sea kayaking.

The instructors were Lt Cdr Joe Wood (OC Victory Squadron, MWS), WO2 James Batchelor (RM Bordon) and CPO Joe Shelverton (RNAS Culdrose).

Thanks must go to the event organiser Lt Oli Fairbairn (HMS Somerset) for his significant efforts in planning the event.

Capt Burrell (Defence Academy), RNKA chairman, also took part in the expedition and was delighted with the weekend and the multitude of demanding, but fun, activities.

The expedition developed navigational skills, weather interpretation, collision prevention, coping with challenging sea conditions, team control and emergency situations.

The team crossed the Solent twice, once in a challenging sea state and at the other end of the weekend in reduced visibility.

Sea kayaking is also a great activity for developing aerobic and muscular fitness and those on the expedition certainly felt physically tired but personally fulfilled by the end.

Thanks must also go to John Saunders (DQHM) for a final update on traffic and environmental considerations in the area and WO2 Bachelor for booking Jersey Camp on the IOW – a great venue to operate from over the weekend.

The RNSC on Whale Island was used for the debrief and to review the successes of the weekend and the less glamorous tasks of washing/returning kit.

For more information on sea kayaking visit www.RNKA.co.uk.

Two trout to shout about

WARREN ‘Mal’ Malcolm was crowned Scottish fly fishing champion for the third year in a row.

He was one of 20 anglers who took part in the Scottish Command open at the Lake of Menteith in the Trossachs.

The weather was good, warm and overcast, but the hot and humid weather of the previous week had forced a lot of the fishing into deeper water.

A few early fish were caught by Sgt Stu Law and WO Barry Prout and as the day progressed the Roman Bay shore seemed to be producing the majority of fish and many of the anglers took full advantage of the rich pickings tight in on the shore.

Other ‘hot’ sites were Gateside Bay and the Rookery with most trout caught on red and black buzzers, red diawl bach, red cormorant and blob patterns.

Best novice went to HMNB Clyde chaplain Rev Richard Rowe; WO Prout won best fish with a rainbow trout of 3lbs 8oz; runner-up was Sgt Law of Aberdeen RN careers office; and Mal’s two winning trout came in at 4lbs 11oz.

Mal said: “The conditions were hard going but I didn’t think two trout would have been good enough to win the award for a third year in a row. I feel on top of the world.”

Thanks to the Glasgow Angling Centre for donating £200 worth of prizes and to Lake of Menteith staff for their hospitality.



Picture: Sgt Andy Malthouse, DMC(RAF)

Rain thwarts Lord's double

CPL Ash Watson thrashes his bat in disgust while a delighted RN cricket captain ET(WE) Matt Thompson (HMS Astute) celebrates the airman's dismissal on the hallowed turf of Lord's at the Inter-Services Twenty20 championships.

Sadly for the RN – defending champions – the rain and the RAF thwarted their hopes of retaining the trophy.

Under leaden skies the holders opened proceedings against the RAF; the sailors and marines set a challenging target of 148 off 19 overs (under the Duckworth-Lewis method), thanks largely to an impressive 73 not out from new cap Mne Rob Urrman.

The Royal Air Force reached their target in 18 overs for the loss of four wickets, although RN skipper Thompson returned figures of two wickets for 18 runs off four overs.

After that narrow defeat, the RN looked to defeat the Army – only for the gods to intervene. Rain meant the match was cancelled, both teams were awarded a point and all hope vanished of the Senior Service holding on to the trophy.

It was eventually lifted by the RAF. When the rain stopped, the final T20 clash between the airmen and soldiers was played, with the former dismissing the latter for a mere 104 to win the match by 38 runs.

Away from Lord's, the ladies' T20 championship was contested at RAF Vine Lane, without the RN team playing a single game together all season.

In the first match of the day, the RN took on the reigning champions the Army and it was clear that our ladies were short of match practice, writes Lt Cdr David Cooke, Secretary RNCC.

Against tight bowling from the Army, only Lt Hazelle Garton RN (Heron) (50) and Lt Cdr Charlie Atkinson RN (Collingwood) (24) made any significant contributions, the RN only scoring 117-6 in their 20 overs.

In reply the Army took 15 overs to reach the total and finished at 119-2, with England squad member A Potgeiter finishing on an unbeaten 61.

Defeat meant the RN were pitched straight into the second match against the RAF – on paper an easier task.

Batting first, the RAF could not get to grips with the varied Navy bowling attack and after 17 overs the RAF had been dismissed for 97 runs, Garton taking 1-7 (4).

The RN's response was swift: Garton in particularly impressive form and her 62 not out secured a comfortable win for the RN by 9 wickets in 16.5 overs.

The final match between the Army and RAF

was a rather one-sided affair. The Army batted first and scored 162-3 (Potgeiter 86 not-out) and then kept the RAF at bay restricting them to 86-7 (20), winning by 76 runs – and taking the IS title.

Lt Garton was awarded the ‘player of the tournament’ for her all-round performance.

In Portsmouth, the Inter-Command championships took the form of a round-robin.

On paper, Portsmouth, Naval Air and Royal Marines looked strong, but there were pleasing performances from all five teams.

For Portsmouth Adnams scored a 48 and 55, Green (Daring) a thunderous 250 not-out against Scotland – which must be some sort of record in this form of the game – and 38 against Plymouth, Jackson took 8 wickets and Lee 5.

Plymouth all-rounder Parker scored a useful 63 and 55, also taking some wickets into the bargain, while Snelling scored an almost-match-winning 49 against Portsmouth.

Pick of the Scotland side was Navy skipper Thompson who took 3-26 and scored 89 in their victory over Plymouth.

A depleted RM team enjoyed comfortable victories over Scotland and Plymouth, but lost against Portsmouth and Naval Air.

Many spectators' favourites Naval Air played extremely well until they suffered a surprise loss against Plymouth.

Fittingly the last match of the competition between NAC and Portsmouth produced a very good final.

Portsmouth posted a healthy 152-5 (Buss 54, Adnams 28, for NAC Storey claimed 2-15 (4) and Rose 2-25 (4), which set a challenging target for the Air Command.

Air never really got going; only R Williams (46) and Rendle (26) making any significant contribution and as a result succumbed to 132 off their 20 overs, giving Portsmouth victory for the second year in succession.

Also at Burnaby Road, holders HMS Nelson faced RNAS Culdrose in the final of the 2011 RN Knockout Cup.

Culdrose skipper CPO JJ Walker won the toss and invited Nelson to bat, a decision he was soon to reflect upon as the Nelson captain and opening bat AB M Green plundered all bowlers to every corner of the ground, one shot even landing in the tennis courts behind the scoreboard.

Green blasted 94 runs in just 47 balls in an opening partnership of 122 – a remarkable innings. After he had been dismissed there were useful contributions from J Mayer 29, A Bulze 28 and S Adnams 24 and a total of 240 looked a secure one for the Portsmouth team.

Culdrose did not get off to the best of starts, losing 2 wickets in the first two overs for one run, however P Amplett 38 and JJ Walker, who batted very sensibly for an impressive

58, steadied the ship and with J Strachan 38 still there near the end, the airmen edged steadily towards their target. When Strachan was dismissed however, victory looked a tall order and with 31 to win off the last over a task perhaps too much. Culdrose eventually finished on 223-6 (35), 17 runs short, a valiant effort after such a poor start.

Seven new caps were awarded to RN U25 cricketers at Aldershot at the start of the 2011 Inter-Service U25 cricket festival.

On Day 1, the RN played the RAF and found themselves fielding in warm but overcast conditions. The two RAF openers were in particularly good form, both scoring half centuries.

Despite U25s skipper Matt Thompson ringing the changes with his bowlers, seam and spin, he could not break down the RAF innings that finished at 260-8 (50). Thompson 3-29 (10), AET P Rose (Yeovilton) 3-40 and AET T North 2-16 bowled well and took the wickets.

The Navy's batting response left a lot to be desired – poor choice of shots, unnecessary run-outs, not helped by excellent RAF bowling and fielding resulted in the Navy collapsing to just 68 all out, Rose making a hard-earned 24.

The second day brought the Army and Navy together and after Thompson won the toss, he elected to field. What a difference a day makes!

The Navy bowlers worked tirelessly, reducing the Army to 127-7 – wow.

A record 8th-wicket partnership between Lewis 114 and Douglas 44 not-out, hoisted the Army to a massive 297 all out. AB D Thurgood (Montrose) 3-55 (10) was the pick of the Navy bowlers.

Chasing that target, the Navy top-order batsmen started well: ET(WE) S Jennings (Neptune) 65 not out, Thompson 61 and ET(WE) I Buss (Daring) 59, setting a solid foundation however the middle order could not capitalise on it and eventually fell 52 runs short at 245-9 (50).

It was a much-improved effort from the first day, but the team were kicking themselves for letting the Army off the hook.

On the final day, the strong-looking RAF side comfortably beat the Army team to justifiably become 2011 U25 Inter-Service champions.

And finally... A UKCC level 2 cricket coaching course will take place at Temeraire from October 24 to 28.

This is an ideal course with which to acquire initial coaching qualifications and caters for cricketers of all abilities. The week includes instruction and assessment with the qualification being awarded to successful candidates on completion.

The RN has six slots on the course, first come first served, all interested should contact Lt Cdr Cooke on 02392 723741 or rns04@fleetfost.mod.uk.



Épée epic for Somerset

SAILORS from HMS Somerset acquitted themselves well in the Forces annual fencing competition.

The Inter-Service contest was hosted by the RAF in Cosford, with two shipmates from the Type 23 heading up from Devonport: Lt Emma Bould, (deputy weapon engineer) and PO Mark Needham (pictured above), avionics technician on the ship's 829 NAS Merlin flight.

The women's competition consisted of teams of two fencers per weapon. Lt Bould and LNN Vicky Thomas convincingly defeated the RAF in the opener, winning all four fights and Lt Bould had only one point scored against her.

Despite defeating the RAF, the Navy eventually lost to a strong British Army performance.

The women were placed second overall, winning the épée and third in the foil.

PO Needham and his team fought a hard match against the RAF and the British Army but lost to both.

Tee and tea for BRNC

PERHAPS not quite in the same league as the performance of Darren Clarke at the Open, but there was nevertheless an excellent day's competition at Dartmouth Golf and Country Club in the annual Royal Navy versus VT Flagship Masters.

The day started with rain and fog – even though it was mid-June – but the spirits of the 23 competitors were not dampened as they started to tee off for the 18-hole stableford competition.

Drawn from Service and civilian staff at BRNC and HMS Raleigh, the lowest handicap on the fairway was a six and the players represented a range of golfing experience.

It was just the second time this competition has taken place. Individual winner from VT Flagship for the competition was George Freemantle, who is normally found in charge of the Naval Stores complex at BRNC. “The whole day was played in excellent spirit,” said George. “There was good rapport and banter between both organisations and establishments and without doubt it was a good day all round.”

The fog lifted and the rain stopped before noon and all the competitors were impressed with the excellent condition of the course. By the end of play it could be seen that it was a closely-fought match with VT Flagship winning overall by just six points.

To complete the day there was a celebratory lunch and prizegiving. Cdre Simon Williams, Commodore BRNC, returned from the assessed basic leadership exercise on Dartmoor in time to make the presentations which included a crystal ship's decanter to the winning VT Flagship team.



East beats West – but both are winners

A LAP of honour in front of a near-capacity 18,000 crowd was the climax of a busy 24 hours in Leeds for Royal Navy **Rugby League** to mark the start of the nationwide Armed Forces weekend celebrations.

The main purpose of the trip north by the league players was the tenth Anniversary 'State Of Origin' match between personnel from the Eastern (Blues) and Western Commands (Maroons).

For the record the Blues won 38-8, although the score belies an awful lot of determination and commitment on behalf of the Wests.

The players left the pitch to a great ovation from an ever-increasing and very discerning crowd in Headingley South Stand who appreciated the quality of the game.

The formal presentations took place at the half-time break of the Leeds Rhinos-Bradford Bulls clash, by which time the rain had been falling heavily for a good half an hour.

This did not deter Rhinos chief executive Gary Hetherington and Julie Hesleden, representing trophy sponsors Hesco Bastion, from carrying out the formalities on the pitch.

Wests skipper and former Rhinos Academy player Lewis Taylor took man of the match for his side, while Matthew Murray took the honours for the Blues after a full 80 minutes in the pack.

This was quite a moment for Murray, having been involved with RNRL since its inception in 1997 and was just reward for his efforts over the years.

Another pair of local lads, Ade Peel and Kev Botwood, jointly received the Origin trophy from Mrs Hesleden on behalf of the Blues.

The two teams then combined for the lap of honour to a fantastic reception from all sections of the crowd.

The ovation was topped off by a rousing version of *Rule Britannia* from the South Stand band as the players passed by which only served to slow the lap down to a crawl.

With referee Steve Ganson impatiently looking at his watch in an effort to get the second half under way the RN players finally left the pitch at the end of a memorable day in Leeds.

As a postscript, the RNRM Charity and local Sea Cadets held a bucket collection which raised more than £1,500. This figure was boosted by a further £350 – proceeds of a raffle held at the VIP dinner before the match.

Not to be outdone by their male counterparts, the RNRL Ladies team – aka the Wrenegades – have been busy with a series of four fixtures in the Women's Rugby League Conference, a big step up for the ladies.

The first two matches were home fixtures against Nottingham Outlaws and West London Sharks.

A late try from second row Sophie Roseman ensured the Wrenegades shared the spoils in the first match in an 18-18 thriller. The second match against the Sharks ended in the home side securing a 26-16 win over the visitors.

The season was rounded off with a return fixture against the Sharks and a tough trip to the Midlands to face the Coventry Bears.

The men's teams will complete their season with two away fixtures; firstly to Humberston for the Academy to take on Norland Sharks in the Adam Drury Memorial match, while the senior team travel to Merseyside to face a strong Thatto Heath Crusaders side.

For full details visit www.pitchero.com/clubs/royalnavyrugbyleague

Pictures: Andrew Varley Photography



● Mne J Gardiner delivers a devastating punch to his opponent in his points victory over Western Province's T Malahla

It's clobbering time...

NOT since the post-war visit of King George VI in 1947 has South Africa welcomed a Royal Navy **boxing** team to their shores.

Having escorted the monarch and his family, HMS Vanguard challenged the Western Cape in the ring only to be matched against the "strongest possible opponents making the contest disappointingly uneven" according to the *Naval Review*.

Sixty-four years on, today's Royal Navy boxing team travelled to the Cape on tour with a chance to settle an old score, writes *Lt Lucy O'Connor*.

After a few days of acclimatisation and training, the RN team embarked on their first show against opponents from the Western Cape, hosted in Michell's Plain, the largest township in South Africa.

There were seven bouts on the programme, many of which included local Western Cape champions. AB Glen Coe (HMS Illustrious) opened proceedings with a fast-paced fight with T Mbangata. Flurries of punches were thrown by both boxers from the initial to the final bell. This captivating bout proved a fitting opener, with Coe awarded a close points decision.

Mne 'Sal' Salero (42 Cdo) faced R Richards in the second contest. From the outset Salero smothered his opponent with strong combination punches, not allowing him a single retort. Switching his shots from head to the body, the marine overpowered and outclassed his foe, forcing the referee to end the contest in the opening round.

This show of naval strength continued into the next contest. ET(ME) Anthony Smith faced C Kwababama and once again dominated from the first bell, raining shots upon his opponent. The referee was forced to deliver a count to the hometown boxer only to be saved by the bell at the end of the first round. Smith landed some sickening body shots early in the second, taking the wind from his opponent and leaving him unable to continue, forcing an impressive stoppage win.

The stoppages continued into the latter half of the competition with Mne Loui Walker (FPGRM) out-boxing W Mhungwan.

With devastating combinations



● British Olympic hopeful Lt Lucy O'Connor faces up to South African bantamweight champion A Madikane in the officer's unanimous points win

from the outset the marine stopped his bemused opponent in the second round.

In the heavyweight contest, AET R Price (849Sqn) was troubled initially by the strong attacking boxing of D Okoejale (W. Province). With a cool head and an extremely mature performance, Price rode the initial storm, cleverly holding and turning his opponent when required.

Waiting for the perfect opportunity, Price took a half pace back as his foe charged and landed a flush rear hand which KO'd his opponent.

Finally the only female bout to be contested saw Lt Lucy O'Connor face the South African bantamweight champion A Madikane.

From the bell the Naval officer started fast, throwing quick combinations and phased attacks, forcing her opponent onto the back foot. Dominating comfortably throughout the remaining contest O'Connor cruised to a comfortable unanimous points decision.

The overwhelming success of the evening saw the RN crowned unarguable victors, winning all seven contests, four by way of stoppage. It was a great start to the boxing tour and perhaps went some way to redeeming the result in 1947.

A short period of rest and recuperation allowed the squad to enjoy the beautiful Southern Cape.

Table Mountain, shark diving and wine tasting were experienced by the touring party.

There were also plenty of possibilities to engage with the local community. The team visited the townships and boxing clubs, teaching the local children and adults to box, enjoying great hospitality the boxers experienced true South African culture.

Before long it was back to business as the boxers prepared for their second show. This time the RN boxers faced South African allcomers and after the rout of the first show, it was bound to be a tougher test.

The second show was held at Wynberg Military Base and saw nine hotly-contested bouts – the first two were particularly enthralling contests.

LPT Gareth Smith (BRNC) took his opponent M Donker to the trenches, winning on a close points decision. In the same vein, AET Jake Beer (RNAS Culdrose) had a 'tear up' with the local favourite S Bam.

Practically folding his opponent in half with body shots at times, Beer showed great determination and heart but lost on a close points decision to the cute local favourite.

The undoubted star of the show was AB Joel Kirby (HMS Nelson). Facing a vastly-more-experienced foe in A Mohlabia, the Navy boxer gave a mature performance which far surpassed his experience.

Keeping his opponent at long

range and counter-boxing to perfection, Kirby ended the bout in the third round with a looping body shot which dropped the local boxer to the canvas and from which he was unable to recover.

Kirby's success was even more impressive when it was revealed that Mohlabia was an international boxer, and is presently in contention for Olympic selection in 2012.

Top of the bill was once again AET Richie Price. Facing M Malumba – worryingly nicknamed 'Big Bang' and a mountain of a man – Price had to keep on his toes.

An enthralling bout eschewed with heavy shots being landed and well taken by both boxers, the entire crowd was on its feet throughout the contest – it was a fitting end to a show full of exceptional boxing quality.

At the final bell the result was destined to be close, but the judges awarded a majority decision to the Navy pugilist, securing a 7-2 victory overall for the visiting team.

After a fortnight in South Africa, the RN fighters can be rightly proud of their phenomenal performance in the ring. From a total of 16 bouts the Navy were victorious in 14 – a particularly respectable achievement given the equal focus placed on the rest and recuperation opportunities while there.

"I'm extremely proud of the performances and the professionalism demonstrated by the boxers throughout this tour, it has been a fantastic experience and I'd like to thank the South African Boxing Federation for its overwhelming hospitality," said RN team coach PO(PT) Stu O'Connor.

The tour was only made possible by the hard work of Lt Doug Wylie (manager), financial contributions from the Sports Lottery and Vesty Foods and the boxers would like to thank all those who made such a successful and memorable tour possible.

